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SECTION TWO

PRINCESS PRIME TIME
David Aaronovitch on the making of *Dianarama*

MARTIN SCORSESE
Talks about de Niro, the Mob and movies

SIX PAGES OF GRADUATE APPOINTMENTS

WIN A SKI HOLIDAY IN COLORADO

Plus K2 skis and snowboards to be won, see page 30

Queen's Speech is overshadowed by rise in unemployment and fall in retail sales Economy blights Tory relaunch

DONALD MACINTYRE
and PAUL WALLACE

Fresh signs of weakness in the economy yesterday blunted the impact of the Government's legislative programme announced in the Queen's Speech, and put even greater pressure on Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to use this month's budget as the launch pad for a Tory political recovery.

The first rise in unemployment for three years and sharp falls in retail sales and in the value of the pound threatened to overshadow a Queen's Speech containing contentious measures on asylum, crime, education and housing, and intended to spearhead the Conservatives' "Autumn Offensive."

Tony Blair and John Major began to draw the battle-lines

other's parties of playing the "race card" over the forthcoming and controversial Asylum and Immigration Bill, which is designed to reduce bogus asylum applications.

Mr Blair, whom senior Tories say will suffer electoral damage if Labour opposes the measure, called for the Bill to be referred to a special standing committee that could call expert witnesses and be "a genuinely consensual exercise in getting at the truth."

Mr Major said that while he would consider the request, he was not immediately "attracted" to the idea. In a strong defence of his own record on race relations, he promised that "genuine asylum cases will always receive a ready refuge in our country" and said that "those who attack this Bill, as Mr Blair did, do our excellent race relations no service whatever."

A further cloud was cast over the Government's political fight-back yesterday when Julian Critchley, the Tory MP for Aldershot who is retiring at the election, announced that he would not be voting Conservative for his own MP in Ludlow, the Euro-sceptic Christopher Gill. In a notably unhelpful article in the *Evening Standard*, Mr Critchley warned that the Tories would probably be in opposition for at least eight years, and added that defeat could leave the party an "unattractive blend of English nationalists, radicals and populists".

for a prolonged general election campaign in pointed and bitter Commons exchanges over a 1995-6 programme containing 15 bills for what will be the last full session of Parliament before polling day.

While the Prime Minister said that the Speech was a "commonsense practical programme of traditional Conservative values", Mr Blair used one of his most effective parliamentary performances as party leader to claim that the programme was not "to help the people of Britain but to play a game in the run-up to the election."

In the fiercest clashes of the day, both Mr Major and the Labour leader accused each



The Chairman of the Conservative Party, Brian Mawhinney, was sprayed with fluorescent orange paint (right) yesterday while making his way from the House of Commons across College Green for lunchtime broadcast interviews. Demonstrators protesting against the Government's Asylum Bill hurled paint and flour. Alan Duncan, Dr Mawhinney's parliamentary aide, threatened a citizen's arrest. Four demonstrators were arrested and taken to Charing Cross police station

Photograph: Globenet

in 1994, will provide vital clues concerning the state of the public finances and just how much he can afford to cut tax on 28 November.

However, the Chancellor may get a fillip from today's inflation figure for October, which is expected in the City to show a fall from 3.9 per cent to 3.7 per cent, as the cuts in mortgage rates made by the building societies feed through and the effects of increases last year drop out.

Today's figures for the public borrowing requirement, which in the first six months of this financial year has been running ahead of the deficit

expected to meet stiff opposition from the right wing of the Conservative Party, will be taken on a free vote.

The Prime Minister also announced a new initiative on drugs to secure European Union funding to help the Caribbean States prevent themselves from being used as staging posts for drug traffic from Latin America to Europe.

In an oblique reference to Leah Betts, the student who has been in a coma since taking Ecstasy, Mr Major said that "only in the last few days we have seen ... a tragic case of how drugs can devastate a family".

Reserve Forces Bill
Tidying up law, plus a new power of call-up for disaster relief and peace-keeping

Chemical Weapons Bill
To ratify the Convention to ban making and use of chemical weapons

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill
Renewal of emergency powers, this time, more temporary than usual

Broadcasting Bill
To regulate new digital technology and allow bigger TV-newspaper companies

Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill
Would allow private sector to build, maintain and operate high-speed railway between Folkestone and London's St Pancras

Nursery Education Bill
Vouchers for part-time places for four-year-olds

Grant-Maintained Schools Bill
Powers to borrow against "non-core" assets

Student Loans Bill
To allow students to obtain subsidised loans from high street banks

Education (Scotland) Bill
Would introduce nursery vouchers north of the border and reform "Highers" (Scotland's A Levels)

Asylum and Immigration Bill
Assumption that asylum seekers from "safe" countries are bogus

Community Care Bill
Some disabled people would be given cash to buy their own community care

Family Law Bill
"No fault" divorce, new emphasis on family mediation, new framework of protections from violence

ority for council housing but right to buy for some housing association tenants

Health Service Ombudsman Bill
Wider powers to consider complaints about doctors and other clinical professionals

Community Care Bill
Some disabled people would be given cash to buy their own community care

Family Law Bill
"No fault" divorce, new emphasis on family mediation, new framework of protections from violence

'Mad boffin' jailed over computer virus havoc

PETER VICTOR

A "mad and reclusive boffin" who wreaked havoc on computer systems by spreading on-screen viruses across the world was jailed yesterday for 18 months. Christopher Pile, 26, an unemployed computer programmer, dedicated his lonely life in Plymouth, Devon, to the creation and dissemination of the viruses that caused untold damage. Pile had a world-wide reputation as The Black Baron. One company lost £500,000 due to his activities.

As he was sentenced at Exeter Crown Court yesterday after earlier pleading guilty to 11 offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990, Judge Jeremy Grieg said damage caused, or



only did Pile create two viruses, but he designed another piece of software called Smeg which made the viruses harder to detect. The encryption engine - Smeg - had been released and could not be traced back.

"I dare say you were looking forward to reading in the computer press about the exploits of the Black Baron," said the judge. "Those who seek to reap mindless havoc on one of the vital tools of our age cannot expect lenient treatment."

Pile designed the viruses called Pathogen and Queeg, names drawn from the scatological science-fiction TV series Red Dwarf, of which Pile was an avid fan. Smeg was also taken from the series.

Self-taught wizard, page 2

potentially to be caused, could run into millions of pounds.

What he designed and released would constitute a threat for the foreseeable future, said the judge. The evidence had confirmed that a "Pandora's Box" had been opened. Not

V&A chief wants to charge £10 entrance

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

The Victoria and Albert Museum is likely to introduce compulsory admission charges and its director believes most visitors can afford to pay £10.

The new director of Britain's national museum of the decorative arts, Alan Borg, has told the trustees that the present system of seeking a voluntary donation is "unworkable".

At present visitors to the London museum are asked to give a £4.50 donation when they enter. No pressure is put on them if they refuse to pay. Many clearly do. The average donation per donor is £2.50 and, according to museum figures, the average amount per visitor is £1.

And in a forthright and controversial statement of his views, Dr Borg will shortly go on record as saying that most people who visit the V & A "could afford to pay a £10 entrance fee if they had to".

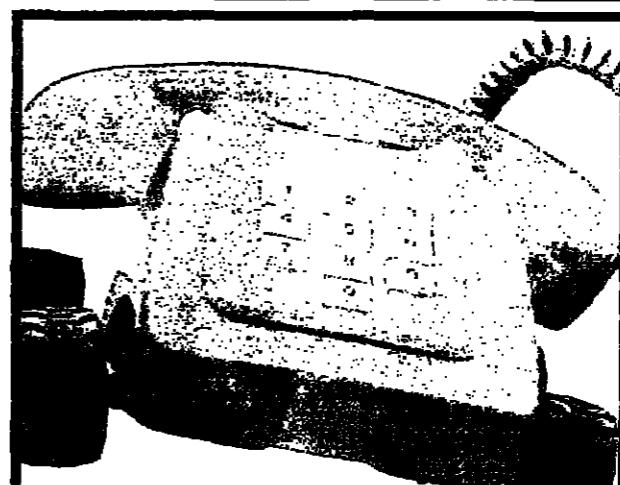
Until now the trustees of the V & A, headed by Lord Armstrong, the former Cabinet Secretary, have vigorously rejected the idea of compulsory charges publicly, though in fact the board is said to be split on the prospect. Lord Armstrong is thought to be not averse to them, while trustees from the art world such as Professor Christopher Frayling, pro rector at the Royal College of Art, are almost equally opposed.

But Dr Borg is unlikely to be deterred, even though charges will be deplored by many in the museums and galleries lobby who say free admission encourages the young and the poor.

Dr Borg introduced compulsory admission charges in his previous job as head of the Imperial War Museum. Today Dr Borg, who took over from Dame Elizabeth Estee-Coll at the V & A last month, will make his first public appearance at the museum at the presentation of its triennial report.

But he is understood to have told the trustees already that the system of voluntary donations merely tries to make visitors feel guilty, and is not an efficient way of raising much needed money.

The only options are charging or having free admission.



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IN BRIEF

Space-age forecast

Scientists are on the verge of forecasting the "weather" in space.

College sale revelation

A potential buyer for the Royal Naval College has revealed the detail of its offer.

Attacks avoided

"It was almost midday and the flood of suicide bombers had not put in an appearance." Robert Fisk on the Algeria's final election. Page 14

Today's weather

Rainy in most of the country. Tonight it will be cold and breezy. Section Two, Page 25

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TV sex doesn't turn off Auntie

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Viewers are more tolerant of sex on television than previously thought, according to new research done for the BBC. Even some of the most conservative watchers - middle-aged women - now find sex and nudity on screen acceptable.

The survey, comparing attitudes now with those in 1985, reveals that over the last decade there has been an increasing liberalisation of attitudes. On sex and nudity, older women's tolerance has gone up by 8 percent to 41 percent, while middle-

aged women have gone up from 44 to 59 percent.

The largest shift in attitudes has been towards homosexuality. Between 1985 and 1995 there has been a 20 percent fall in the notion that homosexuality is offensive on television. Forty percent of women over 55 now find it acceptable, as do 56 percent of middle-aged men (35 to 55) and 70 percent of young men (18-34).

Despite recent complaints about issues as diverse as an orgy scene in *Absolutely Fabulous*, an attempt by Michele in *EastEnders* to seduce her married boss, 44 percent of viewers

rate the BBC's performance in setting standards of taste and decency as excellent or very good. Stephen Whittle, the chief adviser on editorial policy, told a BBC governors' seminar on taste and decency.

That figure was well above the 27 percent reported for ITV in 1985 and 15 percent for Channel 4.

The acceptance rate for bad language has risen from 69 percent to 75 percent among young people in the last 10 years. Women over 55 have also become more liberal: in the same period the percentage accepting bad language has risen from 30 to 38 percent.

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2 news

Major takes initiative on Ulster talks

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major yesterday wrote to the Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, with proposals to get the "twin-track" Northern Ireland peace initiative up and running before the end of the year.

Senior British ministers last night said that all-party inclusive talks could start by next February, but Mr Major refused to withdraw the British demand that the IRA begins de-

commissioning its weapons before Sinn Fein can sit down with the Ulster Unionists.

Brushing aside Irish criticism of Britain for allegedly dragging its heels, Mr Major sought Mr Bruton's support for the strategy involving preparatory talks with all the parties and an international commission to deal with the IRA's stockpile of bombs and heavy weapons.

London and Dublin are still at odds over the British demand,

the third condition set out in Washington by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, that the IRA should begin decommissioning its weapons before Sinn Fein is admitted to the substantive talks.

There appeared a willingness by London to move forward without resolving that issue. "We don't agree on Washington Three. We can put that on one side temporarily to see if there is a basis for agreement," said a senior Government source.

The willingness to move forward without resolving the crucial issue of decommissioning pleased Dublin sources, who welcomed the Prime Minister's letter. "It's been called constructive confusion," said one source.

The twin-track strategy was to be announced at a summit in September, until called off by Dublin after a warning by Sinn Fein that it would not accept the international commission.

Since then, Dublin has been

seeking to persuade Sinn Fein to accept the formula, but talks with Michael Ancram, the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, broke down a week ago, with Sinn Fein demanding that British Army weapons be counted with their own by the commission.

Dublin supported the British Government in rejecting that demand, and the success of the initiative will now depend on the ability of the Irish Government to persuade Sinn Fein to enter the all-party talks. "It's

to join the talks process. British Ministers meanwhile will have to get the Ulster Unionists to enter the talks."

Mr Major attacked the Sinn Fein leadership in his speech to the Commons yesterday for refusing to condemn the punishment beatings meted out to victims in Belfast by IRA supporters. But Downing Street sources made it clear the Prime Minister was not setting out a new condition for Sinn Fein to enter the all-party talks. "It's

something which genuinely upsets him. It is not a new condition, or Washington Four, said the source.

Meanwhile, David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, and Ian Paisley, the DUP leader, joined forces at Westminster to mark their united opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement ten years ago giving influence over Ulster affairs to the Irish Government.

They both rejected the twin-track approach.

IN BRIEF

Murder trial jury is discharged

The trial of a man accused of murdering his wife, a building society manager, and attempting to deceive police into believing that she was killed by robbers who abducted her from their home, was halted yesterday and the jury discharged.

The trial of Gordon Wardell opened on Tuesday at Oxford Crown Court but came to an unexpected stop after a jury member disclosed information to court officials. Mr Wardell, 42, of Merton, Warwickshire, denies murdering his wife Carol, 39, in September last year. The trial is expected to resume today after a new jury has been sworn in.

Water warning

Pubs in areas of Yorkshire affected by planned water cuts could be put out of business if the cuts are approved, a public inquiry considering the application by Yorkshire Water heard.

The loss of the daily water supply in the Calderdale and Kirklees areas would affect food preparation, glass washing and laundry facilities, the hearing at Dewsbury was told. A decision on the application is expected early next week.

Father accused

A man is to appear in court today accused of murdering his eight-year-old daughter and her mother. Mark Aryan, 35, of Southwark, south east London, is charged with the murders of Gillian Jacobs, 28, and their daughter Shamien Aryan, whose bodies were found at a house in Tunbridge Wells on Sunday. He is also charged with the attempted murder of Yusef Aryan, aged five, and Ibrahim Aryan, two.

Ford pay talks

Pay negotiations at Ford were continuing last night after union leaders rejected an improved wage offer of 4 per cent this year and a rise to match the inflation rate next year. Management refused to concede a union claim for a two-hour reduction in the working week to 37 hours.

Drink-drive blitz

A comic commercial with a hard-hitting edge will premiere in cinemas across Britain on Friday in a campaign to press home the anti drink-driving message in the run-up to Christmas. The advertisements, by leading beer brand Holsten Pils, feature the American stand-up comedian Denis Leary and use amusing and blunt language and images. They may also be on the small screen in coming weeks if they are approved by the Independent Television Commission.

Marked down

Water companies have been frozen out of this year's Charter Mark awards because of concern over the quality of some services. Lord Blyth, the chairman of the judging panel, said yesterday: "We concluded that, given the general public concern, it would be wrong to award any Charter Marks to water companies this year."

Grave fraud

A pet cemetery owner who promised dog-lovers ornate caskets and then buried their animals in bin-liners was convicted of fraud at Derby Crown Court. Freda Cunningham was not in court to hear the verdict and sentence was adjourned.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	... 56.40	France	... 14.05
Belgium	... 18.90	Italy	... 14.50
Canada	... 250.92	Ireland	... 22.25
Denmark	... 211.22	Malta	... 43.00
Germany	... 101.18	Norway	... 10.20
Iraq	... 4.50	Portugal	... 35.75
France	... 14.14	Spain	... 20.20
Germany	... 104.65	Sweden	... 18.00
Greece	... 14.50	Switzerland	... 31.00
Luxembourg	... 14.60	USA	... 33.00

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Houston
don't have
problem

'Black Baron' a self-taught whizz kid

PETER VICTOR

The "Black Baron", who spread computer chaos around the world, was in fact a self-taught computer whiz-kid who used a basic personal computer to write viruses that have already caused more than £1m of damage and are almost certainly still attacking computer systems.

Christopher Pile, a 26-year-old loner with no academic qualifications who lived alone in Plymouth, used his natural talent with computers to create infamous viruses called Pathogen and Queeg, based on expressions used in *Red Dwarf*, the BBC's cult television series.

Pile was the most dangerous of a small band of virus writers in Britain. He was also the most infamous, with his viruses posted on Internet sites around the world.

David Emm, senior technology consultant at SCS Software, a computer virus and security firm, said: "If people are intelligent enough to do this sort of thing why don't they go down fruitful paths."

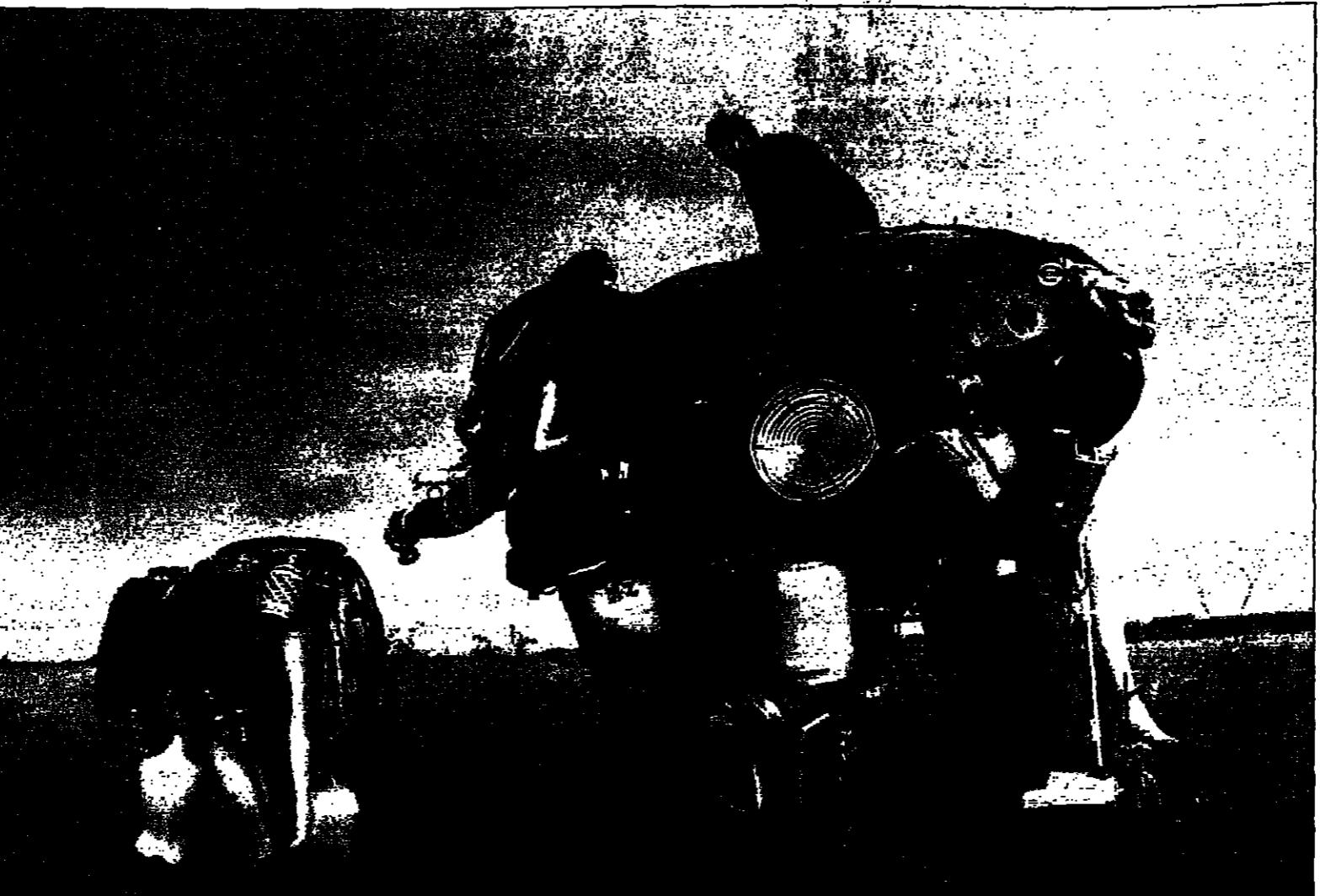
Several computer hackers have gone on lucrative positions in poacher turned gamekeeper roles in international software companies.

Pile did not take this route. Instead, Exeter Crown Court heard that he designed Smeg to defeat the most sophisticated anti-virus programme, and achieve maximum penetration causing the greatest amount of damage.

In a police interview, Pile said he wrote the viruses to increase his self-esteem, and because he was disappointed there was no effective viruses in circulation written by a UK virus writer.

The viruses devised by Pile, who signed them from Black Baron UK 94, were the two most sophisticated ever written.

What made them doubly



Jumbo art: The sculptor, Antony Heywood, with his work 'Mother and Calf', at Wingham, Kent. The sculpture, which is made from disused shop mannequins and television tubes, will be shown at Worthing Museum in January.

Photograph: Phil Houghton

Threat of rebellion over Whitehall cuts

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Senior Tory MPs were last night threatening a rebellion to defend the BBC Overseas Service from the Treasury's five per cent cut in running costs across Whitehall.

Foreign Office sources last night confirmed that the cut in running costs could be passed onto the BBC from the Foreign Office. "It's decided internally how we sort it out within our budget," said one source.

Peter Temple-Morris, the

leader of the Macleod group of Tory MPs, said he was "very concerned" about the threat of a cut and was tabling questions for Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, to ensure it was not passed on to the BBC Overseas Services, which has been cut by £5m over the past three years.

Civil Service leaders were also alarmed at the prospect of the five per cent cut in running costs across the board, disclosed in the *Independent* yesterday.

It could mean cuts in service

to the public, and reductions in already overstretched public services such as dole and benefit offices, said Tony Rouse, vice-president of the National Union of Civil and Public Servants, representing thousands of lower-paid civil servants.

"Any cut in running costs is going to cost jobs. It is being done by a cost jobs, which is clearly hell-bent on getting elected by cutting taxes, but it will mean reductions in services. We have got no fat left at all. There is too much being asked of members," he said.

The Inland Revenue and the

Social Security Department have escaped the full impact of the five per cent cut in running costs because they are carrying out anti-fraud campaigns, which require more staff. But the cuts could still hit their other operations.

The FDA spokesman said it was difficult to judge how many posts would be put at risk by the cut in running costs, but they are braced for bad news on Budget Day. "If you don't have much in your programme, then a bash at the civil service is an easy target," he said.

Marked down

Water companies have been frozen out of this year's Charter Mark awards because of concern over the quality of some services. Lord Blyth, the chairman of the judging panel, said yesterday: "We concluded that, given the general public concern, it would be wrong to award any Charter Marks to water companies this year."

Grave fraud

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Rail franchise for buy-out team

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

One of the companies bidding to run rail services is set to win a 15-year franchise, double the normal seven-years, in order to allow it to buy new trains.

The management buy-out team bid for the London, Tilbury and Southend railway, which has successfully fought off three private sector bidders, is based on the premise that a 15-year term is necessary to allow the purchase of an entire new fleet of trains. The managing director, Roger Salmon, is in the final stages of negotiations with the team and it is thought that the deal would require the new operator to provide the trains within a given timetable or revert to a seven-year deal.

The decision shows the extent to which the Government is prepared to alter the rules in order to win the contract for Great Western Trains.

The veteran Tory MP, Sir Julian Critchley, yesterday dropped a political bombshell by revealing that he will not vote for the party at the general election.

Sir Julian, who is stepping down at the next election, said his decision was based on objections to the MP for Ludlow (the constituency where he will be returning after his retirement), the Euro-sceptic Christopher Gills.

However, Sir Julian said he would not back Labour or the Liberal Democrats.

He announced his decision in a newspaper article in which he fired a devastating broadside at the One Nation group of Tories who he believed had forced him to vote for Margaret Thatcher, and wrote off the chances of a Tory election victory.

The timing of the attack – on the day the Government unveiled its legislative package for the new session of Parliament

– will infuriate John Major and senior ministers.

The left-leaning MP for Aldershot, who has been no stranger to controversy during a colourful political career, said he could not bring himself to vote for Mr Gill, who was one of nine Tories removed from the whip committee last year.

Sir Julian said Mr Gill would take Britain out of Europe.

"Should any Tory who has been pro-Europe since the days of Harold Macmillan and a member of the One Nation group of Tories who he believed had forced him to vote for Mrs Thatcher, and wrote off the chances of a Tory election victory.

The timing of the attack – on the day the Government unveiled its legislative package for the new session of Parliament

had made an exception ... a precedent could have been set.

A legal expert said the judgment made clear it was for local authorities to decide how to exercise their discretion in such cases. Yesterday's ruling did not mean that the custom of shopkeepers displaying their wares on pavements would now disappear – only that it would continue to be subject to local authority control.

The council is firmly of the opinion that pavements are for people, and that they should be kept clear of all obstructions for the benefit of pedestrians – particularly disabled people, people with impaired sight and parents with pushchairs. If we

had made an exception ... a precedent could have been set.

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had made an exception ... a precedent could have been set.

Mr Godfrey was supported by a 751-signature petition and had offered the council a compromise over the size of his display, which was turned down.

Mr Godfrey, 54, whose display protruded about one metre on to the 2.5m wide pavement, said: "I really can't believe that anybody in authority would go as far as this against a small businessman like me." He said the future of

his business was in doubt following a 74 per cent drop in trading since 1992.

A former miner, he bought his greengrocer's business in 1986 after being made redundant from the pits. "The fruit and veg will come in now. The law is the law and I am a law-abiding person," he said.

Mr Justice Hildes said he had ruled against the greengrocer with some "sadness" because it was clear that he was a "hardworking man" whose business had already been hit by decisions to build a bypass and pedestrianise part of Ilkley.

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Red card for the up-front greengrocer

A greengrocer must remove fruit and vegetables from outside his shop after a High Court judge yesterday ruled that the pavement display was breaking the law.

In a case which affects shopkeepers all over the country, the judge said the displays outside Brian Godfrey's premises in Ilkley, Yorkshire, did constitute a "nuisance" in law as it obstructed the pavement and

Judy now has power steering and a top speed of 70 mph.



© Camelot Group plc. Players must be 18 or over.

£30,000 has been given by the National Lottery Charities Board to buy a 16-seat minibus for the Stafford Swallows Sports Club for the Disabled.

The specially adapted minibus will give those with physical and learning disabilities the chance to take part in various sporting activities like swimming and bowling. It's one of thousands of projects, big and small, that will benefit from all the money you're helping to raise. For every pound you spend on The National Lottery or National Lottery Instant, 28p goes to the Good Causes chosen by Parliament. Namely, Sport, Arts, Heritage, Charities and projects to celebrate the Millennium. Over £1 billion has been raised so far, to help people all over the country. Just like Judy here. It means whenever you play The National Lottery, you'll be helping someone else to further themselves.



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drug cuts
heart attacks

Five held in
bunt for drug
girl's supplier

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Euro Disney takes the Mickey into profit



Winning theme: Euro Disney has recorded its first profit since its launch two years ago

Photograph: Paul Lowe/Magnum

JOHN SHEPHERD

Euro Disney's decision to slash admission prices by 22 per cent in April is already yielding financial gains at its theme park, Disneyland Paris. The company yesterday reported its first ever profit, albeit tiny at Ffr2m (£262,000), a year ahead of schedule.

The price cuts, accompanied by an extensive television advertising campaign, helped boost attendance numbers by almost 22 per cent from last year's depressed 8.8 million to 10.7 million in the 12 months to the end of September. Attendance in the first year of operation in 1993 was 9.8 million.

Leisure analysts in the City, however, do not share the management's optimism about the future. In particular, they continue to harbour negative views about the company's financial health, despite the recent refinancing that erased Ffr8.8bn of debts from the balance sheet.

The reaction among investors yesterday was equally as negative. The shares dropped 21p to 194p, and the

steepness of the fall triggered an automatic suspension of share dealings on the Paris bourse.

The profit announced yesterday was only achieved courtesy of banks allowing the company a holiday on Ffr500m of interest payments on loans, and a separate waiver on management fees and royalties.

Euro Disney's holiday on interest payments begins to wind down from next year. In 1996 its interest charges will rise by Ffr120m, by another Ffr230m in 1997, and a further Ffr150m the following year.

Walt Disney, which owns a 39 per cent share stake in the company, intends to start charging Euro Disney hundreds of millions of francs for management time and for copyright royalties in 1999.

Steve Burke, chief operating officer of Euro Disney, yesterday acknowledged the problem, but said he was confident that it could be overcome. Revenues, he said, only needed to be increased by 5 per cent each year to cover the additional payments to the banks and Disney.

"Our bad times are behind us and talk of whether we have built the park in the right place or whether it will ever be profitable is in the past," he added.

However, analysts said the company would have to run fast to stand still given the adverse economic conditions across Europe and the strength of the French currency.

More people may be going to the theme park, but once inside they are reluctant to spend more money than the previous year's visitors. Only 25 per cent of revenue comes from admission charges, currently Ffr195 per adult in the high season, falling to Ffr150 in the winter.

New revenue streams are being developed through building additional leisure facilities for guests staying at its hotels such as a multi-screen cinema, and by targeting families.

Talks are being held with Eurostar to run charter trains, complete with Disney characters on board, direct from Waterloo to the park. Britons account for 10 per cent of total visitors, and are among the higher spenders.

Investment column, page 26

Cholesterol drug cuts heart attacks

GLENDA COOPER

A new drug which slows the production of cholesterol in the liver has had "striking" results in reducing risk to people with high levels of the fat-like substance.

The study found that lowering cholesterol can reduce heart attacks by nearly one-third and the risk of death by 22 per cent.

Coronary heart disease is the single most important cause of death in the UK and throughout the industrialised world. In 1993, 70 per cent of UK adults had high cholesterol levels.

The West of Scotland Coronary Prevention Study trial of the drug pravastatin, sold under the name Lipostat, included 6,500 men from the Glasgow area over a five-year period.

All had high cholesterol levels. All were aged between 45 and 64 and 81,000 men were considered for inclusion in the study.

Half the patients were given Lipostat and half a placebo. Neither volunteers nor scientists knew which had which.

The findings from the study, revealed at the American Heart Association in California yesterday, showed a 31 per cent reduction in risk from a first heart attack or non-fatal heart attack.

The chances of death from heart disease also went down by 32 per cent and death from any cause went down by 22 per cent.

High cholesterol levels have always been viewed as a major risk factor for heart disease, but until now it was not known

whether treatment with a cholesterol-lowering drug could help people avoid a first heart attack.

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance or lipid, produced by the liver and also absorbed into the body from foods such as eggs, meat, dairy products and other animal-based foods.

High levels can form plaque, a thick hard deposit, which clogs the arteries and restricts the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart and brain.

Professor James Shephard, Professor of Pathological Biochemistry at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, who also led the study, said: "These are some of the most striking data I have ever seen in heart attack and total mortality reduction."

The findings strongly support current treatment guidelines and irrefutably encourage physicians to actively treat people who are at risk of heart attack.

He added: "We can now say with confidence that pravastatin reduces the risk of heart attack and death, not just in those with established heart disease but also amongst those who are at risk of their first heart attack."

Michael Turner, director of the Family Heart Association, said: "The cholesterol controversy that has raged for half a century is a controversy no more."

A spokesman for the Coronary Prevention Group welcomed the study's findings but said that the best way for people to keep cholesterol levels down was by following a healthy lifestyle.

Five held in hunt for drug girl's supplier

Police investigating the supply of ecstasy to drug victim Leah Betts yesterday arrested five people.

Detectives also issued an urgent appeal to trace an anonymous woman telephone caller who gave information which they say could provide a key lead in the hunt for the drug pusher who supplied Leah, 18, who was still fighting for her life yesterday.

An Essex police spokeswoman said the arrests followed raids on four addresses in Basildon. A 25-year-old man and an 18-year-old woman were taken from one address and two 19-year-old men arrested from two separate locations. The fifth arrest, of another 19-year-old man, was made later.

All four men were being held on suspicion of supplying a controlled drug while the woman was detained on suspicion of possessing counterfeit currency. All five suspects were being questioned at Basildon police station.

Leah yesterday remained in a coma on a ventilator at Broomfield hospital, Chelmsford, where a spokesman said her condition was critical.

The student collapsed after taking an ecstasy tablet, marked with an apple motif, at her 18th birthday party on Sunday.

at her parents' home at Latchingdon, Essex.

Five people aged between 17 and 19 have already been interviewed and released on police bail, but their arrests on Monday were not thought to have been specifically connected with inquiries into the supply of drugs to Leah.

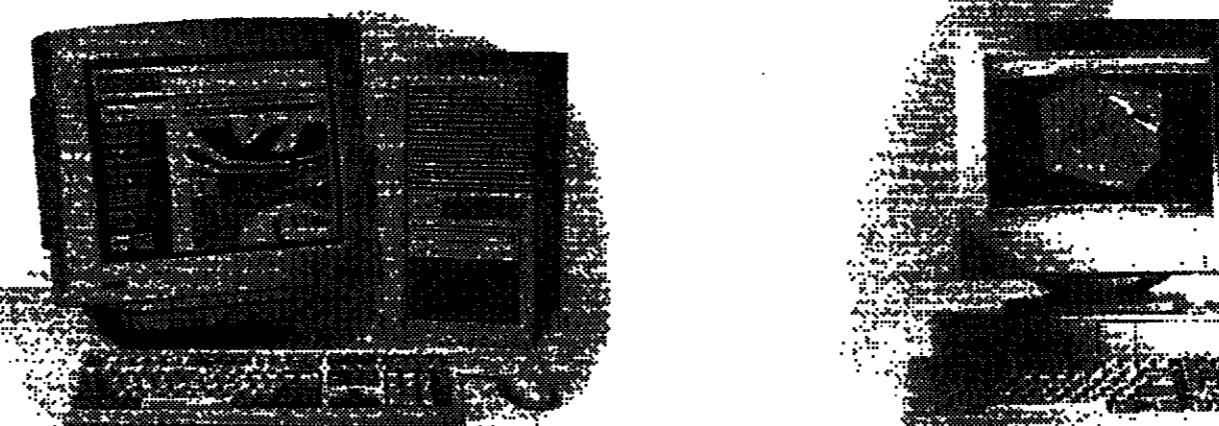
The anonymous caller whom police are trying to trace telephoned Chelmsford police at 11am on Tuesday. The woman told police on Friday night she and a friend were in Raquel's nightclub in Basildon, the place where Leah is thought to have bought the ecstasy.

"They saw a young man 'serve up' ecstasy tablets similar to those taken by Leah," a police spokeswoman said. "One girl, not thought to be Leah, was seen to buy a tablet and shortly afterwards was violently ill and shaking. We are anxious for any of these three girls to contact police."

Detective Chief Inspector Brian Storey said: "We consider this to be a very strong lead. Any information will be treated in the strictest confidence."

It was disclosed yesterday that the ecstasy tablet taken by Leah was not contaminated. However, there was no explanation as to why Leah suffered such a devastating reaction.

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PC Computing June 1995

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH



Asylum & Immigration Bill

The big political football, devised by Home Secretary Michael Howard. Subject of heavy pre-emptive assault yesterday as Tony Blair demanded debate in a "special standing committee" which could take evidence and call witnesses. It would mean assuming asylum seekers from "safe" countries were cheating, and a curtailed appeals procedure.

Political punch:
Furious charge and counter-charge as each party accuses the other of playing the race card.

Real importance:
Will matter to the 30,000-plus applicants for refugee status each year, and to Britain's reputation abroad.

Family Law Bill

Divorce reform, to abolish "quicke" divorces and require a cooling-off period. Plus the resurrection of plans to clarify legal protection from domestic violence, held over after ill-informed Tory "moral majority" revolt, which could now spread to the divorce issue.

Political punch:
Boomerang potential as Tory rebels gear up to defend "the sacred institution of the family".

Real importance:
Will matter to one in three couples who divorce, and many victims of domestic violence.

Grant-maintained Schools Bill

Schools which have opted out of local council control will be given powers to borrow against "non-core" assets. Tories will taunt Blair over his choice of school. But the real political battle comes later with plans to abolish parental ballots for church schools to opt out, which could boost grant-maintained status.

Political punch:
Tories think this issue works for them, while Labour will say they are selling off playing fields.

Real importance:
More financial independence for the minority of opted-out schools.

Broadcasting Bill

To take into account new digital technology, which means at least 16 extra television channels, and allow TV/newspaper mergers (but excluding Rupert Murdoch and Mirror Group). Tories claim it will help make Britain the "enterprise centre of Europe".

Political punch:
One row over Blair's (not directly related) "deal" with BT.

Real importance:
Digital technology may be overtaken by cable, but control of media mergers makes a difference.

Asylum clampdown sparks race-bias fears

IMMIGRATION

JASON BENNETTO

The forthcoming Asylum and Immigration Bill will be one of the Government's most controversial pieces of new legislation and has already provoked accusations that it is playing the race card in the run up to the general election.

One of the central planks of the Bill, whose main aim is to restrict the number of people claiming asylum, is the creation of a so-called "white list" of countries, deemed to be "safe" and therefore unlikely to produce real refugees. Applications from the listed countries will be given a "fast-track" treatment.

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, yesterday attacked the Bill, saying "Race and immigration should not be the playing field of party politics." He called on the Government to refer it to a special Commons standing committee that could scrutinise the legislation and test whether it is justified.

An indication of the sensitivity of the Bill was revealed by the Government's unwillingness to publish any details of the proposed legislation.

Last week, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, retreated from an earlier plan to include legislation to fine employers who hire illegal immigrants. He has now agreed to put the proposal out to consultation following opposition from employers' organisations, civil rights groups and the Department for Education and Employment, which feared it could result in companies being less ready to recruit ethnic minority staff. Meanwhile it is expected that the Bill will require employers to check the records of potential recruits, in an effort to stop illegal immigrants working, backed up by a "light, regulatory approach".

Another expected proposal is the abolition of full appeal rights to those refugees arriving via a safe third country, such as France.

Running alongside the Bill are measures announced by Peter Lilley, the Social Securi-



Guard of honour: Beefeaters at the Palace of Westminster yesterday for the Queen's Speech unveiling the Government's legislative proposals

Photograph: John Voo

ty Secretary, which will make it impossible to enter the country as a visitor, but then seek asylum to claim benefit, in a move designed to save up to £200m a year.

However, the key proposal in the Bill—the "white list"—is designed to accelerate and reduce the cost of processing asylum claims. Asylum applications from residents of those coun-

tries will be presumed to be unfounded and the burden of proof will be on the applicant. They will be dealt with under a fast-track appeals procedure, that is expected to last days rather than months.

Countries that are expected to appear on the list include Ghana, India, Pakistan, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. The Government believes

the measures will act as a deterrent to people who are economic migrants.

The Home Office points to figures published in October that showed that in the 12 months to the end of June, there were 37,900 applications for asylum (excluding dependants) received in the UK, an increase of almost 50 per cent over the previous year.

However, while it is true that more people are applying for asylum, far fewer are being allowed entry. Of the 25,000 cases decided in the year to June this year, only 1,100 people were granted asylum—less than 5 per cent.

The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 has already dramatically cut the number of refugees being allowed to stay in the UK from 20,000 in 1992 to 5,000 in 1994.

Claude Morais, director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, described the asylum element of the Bill as "one of the most irresponsible playing of the race card in recent years". He said the drawing up of a "white list" of supposedly safe countries would result in the very real possibil-

ity of asylum seekers being sent home to face torture, persecution or even death.

Narendra Makanji, chairman of the Anti-Racist Alliance, added that unions and immigrant welfare groups would unite to defeat the Bill. "This Bill is undoubtedly a curtain-raiser for a Tory racist campaign in the run-up to the next election," he said.

The legislation to be introduced would give all parents a voucher with which they could purchase nursery education in either the public or the private sector. There will be no means-testing for those who wish to join the scheme.

All schools participating in the scheme would have to meet certain minimum standards, and would be inspected regularly.

Church protest delays opt-out plans

JUDITH JUDD

Education Editor

Proposals to include clauses in the bill creating a fast-track for church schools to become grant-maintained without a parental ballot have been delayed after fierce opposition from Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops.

The Department for Education and Employment said yesterday that it was still consulting on the plans. Anglican bishops will fight any proposals when they reach the House of Lords. They say church school parents should have the same right to vote on opting out as county school parents.

The Bishop of Coventry, the Right Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, said earlier this week that the plans were incompatible

EDUCATION

with the Christian message because they gave church schools a privileged position and disadvantaged other schools.

The Prime Minister announced his support for a fast-track for church schools to opt out in a speech in July as a way of making opting out more attractive. John Major said governors should be able to take the decision without consulting parents.

But even a church leader who is a member of the Government is against opting out. Canon Gerald Greenwood, Southwark's diocesan director of education and a member of the Funding Agency for Schools board, has written to church school heads to say that his

board believes that the removal of the requirement to hold a parental ballot is "highly undesirable... Where a school has gone grant-maintained, the success of such a venture depends on the continued support of the parents and a vote will have given clear evidence of their position".

The Church of England's board of education is expected to back this viewpoint.

Church officials are also strongly opposed to the idea in the Government's consultation paper that all schools should be made grant-maintained unless they opt to remain with the local authority.

Critics say schools will start to sell off their playing fields and that the plans are not compatible with the Prime Minister's determination to promote sport.

Errors. Her department said that ministers had neither ruled in nor out any of the options.

There were only 15 ballots in 4,000 voluntary-aided or church schools on grant-maintained status between August 1994 and August 1995 and only six voted to opt out.

The grant-maintained schools Bill will allow opted out schools to borrow against their assets, thought to be worth about £2bn.

They will also be able to keep all the money for selling off assets instead of giving half to local authorities as they do at present.

Critics say schools will start to sell off their playing fields and that the plans are not compatible with the Prime Minister's determination to promote sport.

earlier this week showed that of the £1.29bn so far lent to students, only £70m has been repaid.

The banks would have to offer loans to students at no more than the inflation-level interest rate currently offered by the loan company. What was needed was a thorough review of student maintenance, he said.

In Scotland, the Government published plans to establish a joint examinations board to offer both academic and vocational qualifications. It also plans to end requirements for local authorities north of the border to obtain the secretary of state's permission before embarking on large-scale school building projects.

Students who were considered to be a high financial risk being forced to borrow from the loan company. What was needed was a thorough review of student maintenance, he said.

They added that the level of unpaid debt, caused by defaulters and by graduates on low incomes deferring payment, was too high. Figures published

NICHOLAS TIMMINS

Public Policy Editor

Lone parents and families with children are to lose their priority claim to a council house under a Housing Bill which will provide a new right to buy for housing association tenants.

The move comes as single parents face a freeze in Lone Parent Premium and One Parent Benefit in the Budget. In addition, the £5.20 a week premium, which is part of Income Support, is expected to be abolished for new cases.

The Queen's Speech confirms, however, that Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, has won his battle not to abolish the universal One Parent Benefit for new cases—a move which would have required primary legislation and which Mr Lilley feared might not get through the Commons, given the Government's slim majority.

Under the housing legislation, councils will only have to house the homeless in temporary accommodation, and they will be told to redesign their allocation schemes so that people declared statutorily homeless do not jump the queue for permanent accommodation ahead of others on the waiting list—for example, couples who may not yet have children but who live in substandard accommodation.

Ministers claim such a move

will "reflect the underlying values of society" and balanced housing needs "against the need to support married couples who take a responsible approach to family life".

The move comes as single parents face a freeze in Lone Parent Premium and One Parent Benefit in the Budget. In addition, the £5.20 a week premium, which is part of Income Support, is expected to be abolished for new cases.

The legislation will include giving tenants the right to buy new homes built by housing associations and grants worth between £8,000 and £16,000, which will enable some housing association tenants to buy their existing homes. Houses built in communities of fewer than 3,000 people will be exempt, however, to ensure that associations can continue to build in rural areas without the stock being lost for local people.

Other measures will make letting easier for small landlords and create a statutory right to adjudication in disputes over construction contracts. The arrangements for registering architects will also be simplified.

A Community Care (Direct Payments) Bill will allow the disabled to buy their own packages of care through cash grants from local authorities. The Bill will allow local authorities to decide whether or not to use their powers.

Banks are sceptical over loan scheme

FRAN ABRAMS

Education Correspondent

A question mark hung over the Government's plans to privatise student loans last night as banks expressed scepticism about taking part.

Ministers hope to save up to £1bn a year by persuading financial institutions to take on most of the cost of student loans.

The existing Student Loans Company would continue to offer loans to students who wanted them, but it is hoped

STUDENT GRANTS

that the banks might be prepared to take much of the risk and expense in order to win a bigger share of student business.

Talks with the High Street banks are still continuing, but last night they displayed little enthusiasm.

The present scheme, which was launched in 1990, was originally intended to involve the banks but they pulled out because they did not believe it would be profitable.

Last night a spokeswoman for

Barclays said it had not yet committed itself to the latest plans.

"We have made it very clear that any arrangement to run a scheme would have to be run on a commercial basis," she said.

Other banking sources suggested last night that ministers would have preferred to hand over the whole scheme to the banks, but that they would not accept any such arrangement.

They added that the level of unpaid debt, caused by defaulters and by graduates on low incomes deferring payment, was too high. Figures published

earlier this week showed that of the £1.29bn so far lent to students, only £70m has been repaid.

The banks would have to offer loans to students at no more than the inflation-level interest rate currently offered by the loan company. What was needed was a thorough review of student maintenance, he said.

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THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

Nursery Education Bill

A limited pilot scheme for vouchers worth £1,100, which parents of four-year-olds could spend on a part-time place at a local council nursery school, a private school or a pre-school playgroup. To be extended nationwide months before the 1997 election.

Political punch: big battle over education choice when election "bribe" arrives

Real importance: matters a lot to 150,000 four-year-olds presently not at nursery school

Criminal Trials Bill

Defence lawyers would have to disclose broad outline of their case in advance of trials. Liberal lawyers hate it; but barristers Straw and Blair have no problem with much of it. Insofar as it is designed to stop so-called "ambush defences" - where defendants waste court time with last-minute stories - it is sensible.

Political punch: Howard wants to portray the opposition as soft on criminals, but they're not playing

Real importance: Could speed up court proceedings

Housing Bill

Lone mothers would not get priority for council housing. Labour will try to avoid seeming to defend feckless young women who allegedly get pregnant to get a home, and will point out that families with children are also hit.

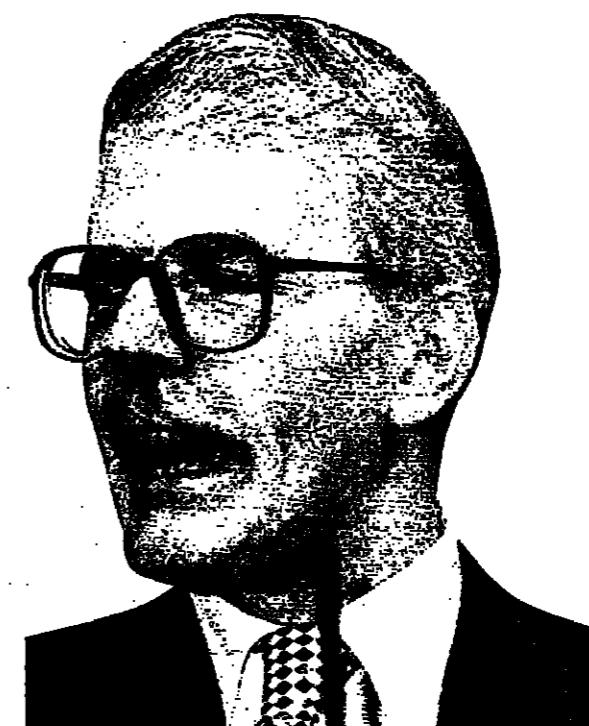
Political punch: Strong issue for Tory moral majoritarians, but Blair's not keen on parents who choose to go it alone either

Real importance: Depends on detail, but could increase homelessness

MIS would adopt a role against organised crime, to bolster Tory claims to be tough on drug dealers. Goes with steps towards a national police force, the so-called "new FBI". There's nothing to suggest how MIS officers would be accountable - they'd still give evidence behind screens.

Political punch: Tories will revel in crack force of secret service agents, Labour will oppose secrecy

Real importance: Redirection of security forces from terrorism



Blair dismisses 'rag-bag ideas to save Tories'

STEPHEN GOODWIN

Tony Blair dismissed the Queen's Speech as a "pathetic mouse", a rag-bag of right-wing ideas designed only to secure the survival of the Conservative Party.

In a testy response, John Major accused the Labour leader of "remarkable, chameleon-like ability to change political colour, depending on the audience" and commended the "common-sense" policies of the speech.

"Our legislative programme is the right programme for this country. It will also be a litmus test for the Opposition," the Prime Minister said.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said it was programme of "fag-end measures from a fag-end Government". The real event that mattered would be the Budget in two weeks' time. "This Government has nothing further to say to the nation, except 'please vote for us because we are going to give you tax cuts'."

With the party political game being played in earnest by both sides of the House, Mr Blair seized the initiative when it became apparent Government whips had instructed backbenchers to bar him but not to try and intervene.

"What a pathetic bunch they are," the Labour leader taunted. "To think that these people can keep themselves in government for another 18 months is a tragedy for this country."

Opening on the common ground of Northern Ireland, Mr Blair promised continued support for the Government so long as Labour believed ministers were acting in good faith in the search for peace.

But he found the rest of the Queen's Speech "utterly irrelevant" to the interests of Britain. "It is all about the interests of the Tory party, cobbling together any old bric-a-brac of legislation that can keep the Conservative Party in one piece." The only way this could be done was by "appeasing" the right, he said. "It is far from one-nation politics as it is possible to imagine."

COMMONS DEBATE

He pointed out the curiosity of Tuesday's press briefing on the speech given by Brian Mawhinney, chairman of the Conservative Party, rather than by the Leader of the House, as was traditional, or a minister.

Mr Mawhinney had "given the game away" by claiming the purpose of the Queen's Speech was to smoke out Labour. "Not to provide new energy or ideas or vitality for Britain, but to smoke out the Opposition. Not to help the people of Britain but to play a game in the run up to the election," Mr Blair said.

The speech made no real recognition of the state of Britain - 35th in the world in education standards and down from 13 to 18 in the economic league. Yet the Government had benefited by £120bn from North Sea oil and £80bn from privatisation.

"People often say about the Conservatives, they may be cruel but they're competent. This is an economic record of shame. They are cruel and incompetent in equal measure."

Labour would increase spending, put up taxes, let inflation rip and recognise the need for immigration controls. But to Tory protests he said race and immigration should not be the "plaything of party politics". He called for the Bill to go before a Commons special committee "and let it be a genuine consensual exercise in getting at the truth".

John Redwood, the unsuccessful Tory leadership challenger, reiterated his call for £5bn tax cuts and criticised the Government on law and order. "Too many criminals are getting away without being detected, too many criminals seem to be able to get through a trial when the evidence looks quite strong against them," he said.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, had to look at the balance again. "People are worried about the security of their jobs, and their homes and their families and it is those issues which this Queen's Speech followed by the Budget must tackle and must be seen to be tackling in a way which meets the mood of the times," he said.

Mr Major promised free

votes on matters of conscience in the Bill on divorce and domestic violence and announced that he would be asking the European Union to help Caribbean states stem the flow of drugs from Latin America. In repeated personal attacks, he mocked Mr Blair's use of "cheap soundbites" yet went on to hammer away with the Tories own favourite soundbite of Labour as "unfit to govern".

The Labour leader's speech was "humbug in its very worst", Mr Major said. "It was what we have come to expect from him - cheap soundbites and no indication of his real policy substance, if he has any at all."

He said the Budget would show the Government's determination to turn Britain into the "enterprise centre of Europe". It would be consistent with sound public finance and a resolve to move further towards a more enterprising economy.

"We have brought public spending under control. We will reduce it further," he said. "And when prudent, we will cut taxes on companies and on individuals."

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Full house: The Queen delivering her Speech in the Lords

Photograph: John Stillwell/PA

TV market to be opened up ahead of 'digital revolution'

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The Government yesterday confirmed it would introduce a radical new Broadcasting Bill to "extend choice and competition" in the UK media industry.

The effect will be to relax rules governing cross-ownership among newspaper, television and radio companies and to pave the way for the introduction of digital terrestrial television within two years.

The Bill, based in part on two White Papers published earlier this year, will be tabled at the end of the month.

A last-ditch lobbying campaign is expected from media companies aimed at overturning some key proposals in the Government's original plans.

The White Paper on Media Ownership, published in May, proposed new rules that would allow greater cross-holdings among newspapers, television and radio companies. It would free newspaper groups, with the exception of the two biggest, Rupert Murdoch's News Inte-

MEDIA OWNERSHIP

rnational and the Mirror Group, to control broadcasters for the first time.

The White Paper on Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting, released in August, proposed complicated rules for the introduction of new digital TV services, bringing as many as 20 new "over-the-air" channels to UK homes, but only if televisions are fitted with special decoders.

Existing terrestrial broadcasters - the BBC, ITV, and Channel 4, along with the planned Channel 5 - would be guaranteed a place in the digital future.

Digital plans have already been criticised by many commercial media companies and by the BBC, which have argued in submissions to Mrs Bottomley that her proposals are unworkable.

Specifically, they believe the Government's preference to award licences for "multiplexes" of up to three digital channels to commercial middlemen

would put broadcasters at a disadvantage.

They also call on the Government to set a firm schedule for the transition from traditional analog television to digital, claiming that the investment necessary to launch the new services will only be forthcoming if the timetable is known in advance.

For its part, the BBC has also asked that a multiplex be set aside solely for the use of the public service broadcaster.

Views on the Government's plans to reform cross-media ownership rules received a mixed response when they were unveiled last May.

Companies such as Associated Newspapers, publishers of the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening Standard*, welcomed the Government's decision to allow newspaper groups to control television broadcasters, subject to a ceiling of 15 per cent of the total television market.

But both Mr Murdoch's News International and the Mirror Group were highly critical of the limits placed on

Defence will have to disclose case

STEPHEN WARD

companies which already control at least 20 per cent of the national newspaper market. Several ITV companies, including MAI, the conglomerate which controls Anglia Television and Meridian, also complained about the Government's refusal to lift the limit of two ITV licences that can be held by a single company.

The City still expects the limits to be lifted, perhaps by the time the draft legislation is tabled, in two weeks' time.

The shares of some ITV companies have risen sharply on expectations that large commercial broadcasters will be able to own more than two licences.

Small media companies are concerned that they will be swamped by broadcasting giants when digital TV arrives.

A spokesman for the Department of National Heritage said yesterday that the Government had reflected on the advice provided by the industry, but gave no indication as to whether the proposals would be changed.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

Under the new Criminal Procedure and Investigations Bill there will be three stages to the disclosure procedure: the prosecution would first release unused material which might undermine its case; in response, the defence would, for the first time, have to disclose information about its case to narrow the issues in dispute.

Finally, the prosecution would give any additional unused material which might assist the defence case.

Under the present law, the prosecution is obliged to disclose almost all its unused material to the defence.

The Bill will also introduce a Code of Practice for the police which will cover what materials they would be obliged to preserve and to make available to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Another section of the Bill will provide judges with powers to order a preparatory hearing in a long and complex case if it was thought there would be significant benefits.

NHS ombudsman's powers increased

The Health Service Ombudsman is to be allowed to investigate clinical complaints against doctors and nurses in the most significant cases to his powers since the office was created 23 years ago. His jurisdiction is also to be extended from hospitals to cover more than 50,000 GPs, dentists, pharmacists and those who provide NHS optical services. The change is the culmination of a 20-year campaign to broaden the ombudsman's powers beyond just investigating "maladministration" by hospitals and health authorities. It follows mounting criticism of the way the NHS has handled clinical complaints against doctors but coincides with a change of attitude by the British Medical Association.

Army reservists to get enhanced role

The Reserve Forces Bill changes archaic laws about using Britain's 255,000 reserves to support the increasing number of military operations which Britain is carrying out in peacetime. The Bill will mainly affect the Army's 195,000 ex-regulars and 60,000 territorial Army members. It will bring in a new power to call up reserves for humanitarian aid, disaster relief and peace-keeping operations, like those in Bosnia and last year's operation in Rwanda, and new measures to safeguard reservists' civilian jobs if they are called up.

Fast-track for less serious libel cases

A Defamation Bill which would introduce new summary procedures to enable judges to deal quickly with straightforward and less serious libel actions. The Bill would offer new defences to defendants who were willing to offer an apology or compensation - including damages assessed by a judge - to the plaintiff.

Chemical weapons production outlawed

The Chemical Weapons Bill is Britain's "instrument of ratification" to fulfil its obligations under the October 1993 international Chemical Weapons Treaty, which has been signed by 159 countries. The treaty will come into force six months after 65 states have ratified it. The Bill will make it an offence to develop, produce, process or transfer chemical weapons - poison gases and droplets - or build any facility to do so. It will also be an offence to help anyone else make such weapons.

news

Conservation action plan 'will lead the world'

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Britain will next month launch an action plan for saving its own threatened species and habitats. Drawn up by government and voluntary conservation groups, the draft strategy will be presented as a model for the rest of the world.

There will be individual plans for safeguarding 114 plant and animal species and 14 different types of habitat, all declining or at dangerously low levels.

For each species and habitat the plan will set out its present status, how it can be maintained or increased and what it will cost. Funding the total programme would require at least £100m a year but some of this money is already being spent, and about half of it comes from voluntary conservation groups.

Graham Wynne, director of conservation at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, said: "It's a draft strategy which John Gummer (the Secretary of State of the Environment) deserves credit for supporting. Now we'll have to see if the entire Government can deliver."

The action plans cover popular threatened species found across continents, like the

European otter, but there are several obscure ones unique to Britain. On the islet of Lundy, in the Bristol Channel, is a species of wild cabbage which only grows there. On it lives a beetle species which is in turn unique to that cabbage.

Including both makes the point that humanity should at least try to avoid wiping out any species through its own population growth and economic development, rather than devoting all efforts to charismatic species like the tiger.

The UK list includes 10 mammal species, nine birds, three reptiles and amphibians, four fish, 30 insects, 15 other invertebrates, 20 flowering plants and 25 lower plants including ferns and mosses. Many are unique to Britain.

Among the birds is the skylark, which still numbers hundreds of thousands but has undergone a precipitous decline due to the spread of modern farming methods.

The shorter habitats list includes the Caledonian pine woods of Scotland, lowland heaths of the kind which once covered much of southern England, and fens. There is a target to increase heathland area by 23 square miles.

Drawing up the strategy has taken nearly two years, and involved the RSPB, the network of county wildlife trusts and the World Wide Fund for Nature. Also taking part are small voluntary groups like Plantlife and Butterfly Conservation.

The UK is one of more than 100 nations which have ratified the UN Biodiversity treaty, signed at the Earth Summit in Brazil three years ago. The strategy is Britain's way of implementing the treaty. It's important that rich countries should give a lead to the developing nations on conservation," Mr Wynne said. "If the Government acts on this the UK will be giving very positive signals for others to follow."

Most developing countries have much greater biodiversity – variety and numbers of species – but face greater problems in conserving it. A combination of poverty and rapid population growth mean natural habitats are rapidly being destroyed along with tens of thousands of species.

The only way of saving them is to protect large areas of habitat and it is now recognised people living around them must be given an incentive to join the protection effort.

Wren masterpiece: Plan to merge 17th-century complex with nearby campus



Grand design: John McWilliam (left), Greenwich University deputy vice-chancellor, with the vice-chancellor, David Fustey, in the Great Painted Hall at Greenwich Naval College after disclosing their bid yesterday. The other seven bidders remained anonymous. Photograph: Edward Webb

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University reveals bid for naval college

IAN MACKINNON

As the deadline for opening bids for the Royal Naval College in Greenwich passed at noon yesterday, one of the key contenders revealed details of its offer.

Civil servants from the Ministry of Defence, which will play a leading role in sifting the proposals, disclosed that it had received eight sealed expressions of interest but declined to name the bidders.

However, minutes after the deadline passed the University of Greenwich, supported by the National Maritime Museum, outlined its plan which focused on the increased public access to Wren's architectural masterpiece on the Thames.

Equally, the university stressed that an integral part of its scheme involved establishing a committee, on which it would have minimal representation, to set guidelines for maintenance to ensure the buildings' upkeep.

But once those elements designed to reassure the Government and the public are stripped away, Greenwich wants to amalgamate the college with some of its other sites to cater for about 2,000 students.

John McWilliam, the university's deputy vice-chancellor, said that in using the buildings as an educational establishment it would be in keeping with the naval college's past.

Greenwich's plan would also result in few of the 300-year-old buildings being changed from their present use as offices, tiered lecture theatres or residential accommodation for students.

Of greatest concern in the wake of the announcement of the sale of the 150-year lease was the fate of the chapel and Great Painted Hall.

The university wishes that the chapel should be used by the students and local people as a place of worship and for musical performances, while the

hall would primarily be used for civic functions by the Borough of Greenwich, though the public would have access to both.

The university would slowly assume responsibility for 75 per cent of the £2m annual upkeep budget, the balance paid by the Government.

In an effort to enhance the appeal of the buildings, and aid its World Heritage Site application, the university will reduce the current 200 parking spaces within the complex.

The other bidders, which have chosen not to reveal their identities, will also have adapted their offers to show that their plans are "sympathetic to the character of the site".

The MoD, in consultation with the National Heritage department, English Heritage and another of other bodies, will assess the suitability of each offer and ask for more detailed plans and presentations with a final decision not expected until the middle of next year.

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news

Police sting led to return of stolen masterpiece

REBECCA FOWLER

The trial into the theft of the £25m masterpiece, switched from Oslo in Norway, to London this week to discover how Scotland Yard won back the painting for the Norwegians after it was stolen in one of the most dramatic art thefts in recent decades.

British police revealed yesterday they had launched an undercover operation to recover *The Scream* in a carefully planned sting at a Norwegian hotel, after a tip-off from a British solicitor who had been contacted by one of the thieves.

The operation was carried out by two undercover officers known as Sidney Walker and Chuck Roberts, who posed as art experts representing the J Paul Getty Museum to set up a bogus £315,000 deal.

They gave statements during a two-day hearing at Bow Street magistrates' court in central London to protect their identities because under Norwegian law witnesses cannot give evidence anonymously.

John Butler, former head of Scotland Yard's Fine Art Squad, masterminded the operation with Norwegian police, after a secret meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March 1994.

"These two officers are the most experienced undercover officers in the United Kingdom, and they had done dozens of operations throughout the world," Mr Butler said yesterday.

"We had to have a very fluid plan... The trick is to protect undercover officers, don't lose the money, and try to achieve your objective."

The Scream, Norway's most treasured painting, was stolen from the National Gallery in Oslo in February 1994.

Two men used a step ladder to climb into the gallery, grabbed the painting and then disappeared.

The thieves demanded a

£690,000 ransom for the work, completed in 1893, which depicts a waif-like figure gasping with angst beneath a blood red sky, but the Norwegian government refused to agree to their demands.

When a British solicitor, condemned the London Clue, contacted Mr Butler to say that one of the criminals involved in the theft had contacted him.

Scotland Yard devised a plan, working with Norwegian police, to recapture the painting. Mr Butler worked with Inspector Lieff Lire, head of Oslo's serious theft squad.

Last May, Mr Roberts travelled to Oslo, posing as a museum representative. In the Sky Bar bar of the Plaza hotel he met Jan Olsen, one of four men on trial for the theft, and Einar Ulving, a "facilitator" who is not facing charges. There the men discussed a deal.

However, the following day over breakfast Mr Olsen demanded £300,000 for the painting, and a further £15,000 for expenses, and was shown the money, in cash, in a deposit box at the hotel by Mr Walker.

On 7 May, Mr Ulving drove Mr Roberts to his summer house in Aasgaardstrand, 55 miles south of Oslo, where the painting was hidden in the cellar. "It was wrapped in a blue bed sheet and was unwrapped it carefully," Mr Roberts said.

"I saw *The Scream* as I have seen it in reproductions. It could tell it was the original and not a copy."

He took the painting back to his hotel room, via the fire escape, while Mr Walker went with two of the alleged thieves to pick up the money.

But the thieves were arrested at the Grand Hotel in Oslo, the meeting point where it was agreed that they would pick up the money, although Mr Walker said he was surprised only two officers had been sent for the bust. He commented that they were carrying a bag which appeared to contain sandwiches.

A star is born: Unknown actor lands lead role in £3m production of 'Tommy'



Pinball wizard: Paul Keating (above) with co-star Gail Easdale and (below) working on the till at Tesco

Photographs: David Sandison



Fame and fortune await teenager from Tesco

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

A £50-a-week part-time worker at Tesco has landed the part of Tommy in the forthcoming west end musical of The Who's rock opera.

Nineteen-year-old Paul Keating from Romford in Essex, will increase his salary 20 times over when he plays the deaf, dumb and blind pinball wizard in the £3m production at the Shaftesbury Theatre next Spring.

He beat a staggering 7,000 other hopefuls including seven pop stars with chart hits and had to sing in 12 auditions.

Paul, who was back in the stock control room at Tesco yesterday, working out his notice before starting rehearsals, has

the dubious advantage of resembling *Tommy*'s composer, The Who's Pete Townshend.

The show's producer, André Płaszczyński, said: "There is a passing resemblance to the composer of the piece. Paul has that patrician profile."

He added: "We would have been very happy to have a big name in the part, and we had a number of pop singers, five British and two Australian, but I cannot name them. A couple of them were well over 6ft, which is too tall. Tommy needs to suggest something frail. Paul is also a really strong rock tenor with great range and power."

The new star, who sang in his local church choir and has been working at Tesco for the last two years, has played small parts at his local theatre in Ilford and

reads *The Stage*, which is where he saw the advert for the auditions.

Paul said yesterday he had never been a fan of The Who, and had never heard *Tommy* until he applied for the audition. He was more of a Madonna and Björk man.

He added: "I can't wait to get started. I don't really play pinball so I will have to start practising. And Tesco have said I can have my job back if it all fails."

Pete Townshend promised to initiate his new star. He said: "In true leftie-luvvie tradition I'm going to nurture his talent with long sessions of Shepherd's Bush deep background in which Paul will eat jellied eels, learn to ride a Vespa, discover his inner child and prepare himself to selflessly pay huge tax bills."

'Secret' pro-hunt group to go public

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

A new and powerful pressure group for blood sports and countryside interests will be launched today, after months of secret preparation.

Those involved in founding the Countryside Movement are dominated by the great, the good – and the wealthy. Several of their meetings have taken place at the London offices of the Prince of Wales' Duchy of Cornwall, under the chairmanship of Lord Peel, a leading Duchy office-holder.

One of the prime motivations of supporters is to make it as difficult as possible for a Labour government to ban hunting, using expensive advertising campaigns and mailing millions of potential supporters. Tony Blair has promised a free vote on the issue and the great majority of his MPs will be in favour of a ban.

At today's London launch, they will emphasise that their new organisation is much broader than merely a pro-hunting, shooting and fishing lobby. The main aim is to fight for rural traditions and the rural economy, and for greater understanding of the countryside among an overwhelmingly metropolitan population.

The *Independent* has received leaked minutes of two confidential meetings which have taken place this year.

Among those present have been former *Daily Telegraph* and now *Evening Standard* editor Max Hastings, the Duke of Westminster – one of the wealthiest men in Britain – and the president of the National Farmers' Union, Sir David Naish.

Lord Peel, the initial chairman at early meetings, is a descendant of Britain's most famous huntsman. The executive chairman is Sir David Steel, the former Liberal Party leader who is standing down from the House of Commons at the next election. He has already rented an London office.

The Countryside Movement already has over £200,000 from founder members and hopes it could bring in up to £5m a year, most of which will be spent on campaigning and advertising.

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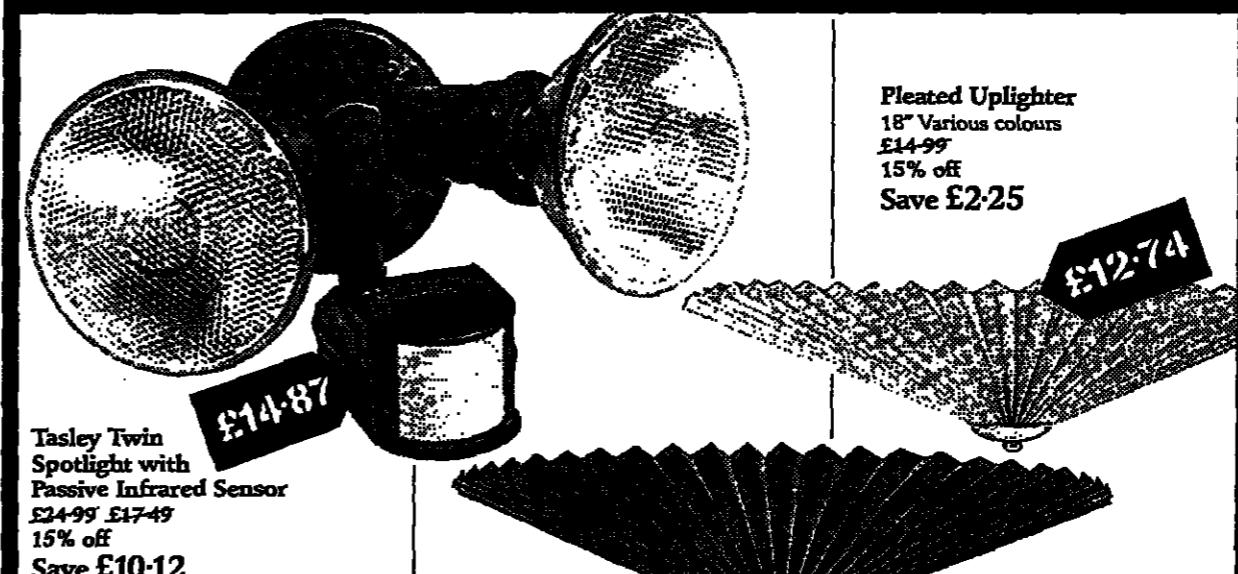
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news

Guilty verdict ‘would make West a victim’

WILL BENNETT

Convicting Rosemary West of murder would add yet another name to the list of her husband Frederick's victims, the jury at Winchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

Not a shred of evidence had been produced to link her with any of the 10 murders with which she is charged and to which Mr West confessed before his death, Richard Ferguson QC, for the defence, said.

"On the one hand, you have the siren voices urging you to convict because Rosemary West is an evil woman, on the other hand, you have your consciences and your oath," Mr Ferguson told the jury in his final speech. "The last thing you would want to live with would be the realisation that you have added yet another victim to the list of Fred West's victims."

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at the Wests' house, 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, and at their previous home in the city. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found hanged in his prison cell on New Year's Day.

Mr Ferguson told the jury that the prosecution had to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that Mrs West was guilty of the murders.

He continued: "You may have come to the conclusion that as a mother and a woman, her conduct fell far below that which you might expect ... but

that does not make her guilty of the crimes with which she has been charged."

"When it comes to proof of the actual crimes charged against this woman, they have not got the evidence. Speculation yes, opportunity perhaps, but proof, no, and you cannot convict without proof."

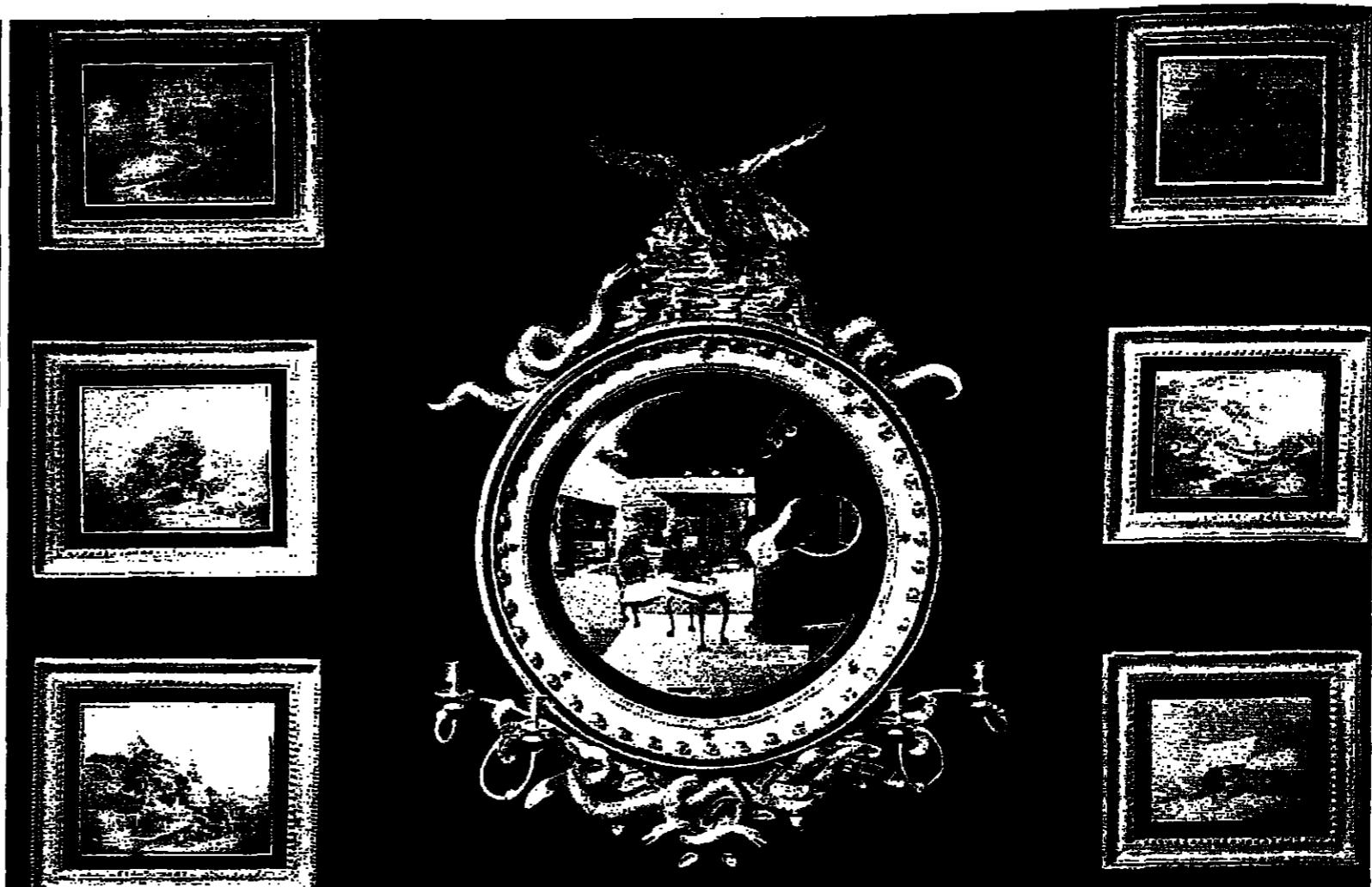
"There is not a shred of direct reliable evidence to show that this defendant was a party to their deaths."

"There is no fingerprint evidence to associate this defendant with their deaths, there is no forensic evidence to associate this defendant with these deaths, there is no eye-witness, there is no confession."

"This is not like the trial of OJ Simpson in America. There are no bloody footprints here, there are no gloves, there is no DNA evidence. You are not being asked by us to acquit in the teeth of the evidence. You are being asked by us to acquit because there is no evidence. All you have is conjecture, suspicion and perhaps prejudice."

Mr Ferguson said that although the jury might regard Mr West as "the very epitome of evil", if jurors believed that what he said in police interviews might have been true then they must return a not guilty verdict.

"We accept that the recordings you heard were not the comprehensive truth. Nevertheless the broad thrust of what he told the police in those early interviews was, we say, essentially correct. Rosemary West was not a party to these



Reflected glory: A Regency giltwood convex mirror catches the hanging of an antique mirror at the week-long Fine Art and Antiques Fair at Olympia in London which began yesterday. Among other pieces is an 1819 silver gilt soup tureen valued at £1m. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Young poets put trust in future

JOJO MOYES

Poet Roger McGough was among the judges who yesterday selected 10 poems from almost 14,000 entries in the National Trust's "Saving Places" poetry competition.

Young people under 16 were invited to write about what they would like to see saved for the benefit of people now and in the future part of the trust's centenary celebrations.

Sally Bacon, one of the competition's organisers, said that the judges had been stunned by the quality of the entries. "We were delighted with the standard. Most of the judges, many of whom regularly judge poetry competitions, were amazed by the fact that they were written by people under the age of 16," she said.

Conserving plant or animal life was the most popular subject, attracting a quarter of all entries, closely followed by global issues and pollution.

DAILY POEM

Fieldwalking

(the recently discovered site of a Roman villa in Tockenham village)

By Katie-Ellen McCrory

*My eyes dance from edge to edge
Scanning*

*The ploughed field, heaps of earth
Mounds like hills, hide small clues.*

*My eyes glance from edge to edge
Sweeping*

*I walk past the ghost of the Roman villa
Where shadows mark the vanished walls
My hands sweaty and stained with dirt
I pick at grey, blue and terracotta
Stuff my pockets with history's broken pieces.*

*Sifting through,
I catch a signal
As the sun flashes like an S.O.S.
From a hand held mirror.
MAYDAY!*

*A fallen plane, a sinking ship
The last survivor clinging to the wreck.
A bright thing digs its way out
From beneath the collapse of centuries.*

*I turn it to the light
A stone cat's claw sits in my palm.
A flint scraper
Sharp edged*

*to scour fat from skins
Which hung in caves, long before the Romans arrived
To build their roads.*

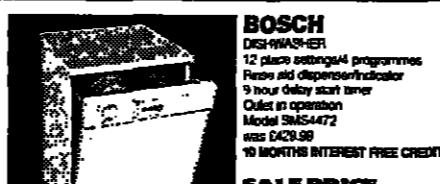
*This flint confronts me,
Prehistoric ston in my palm
This, the oldest tool working before the Romans
And is still sharp.
It cuts this paper, these words.*

Katie-Ellen McCrory, from Salisbury in Wiltshire, won the 9 to 13-year-old age group in the National Trust's "Saving Places" poetry competition.

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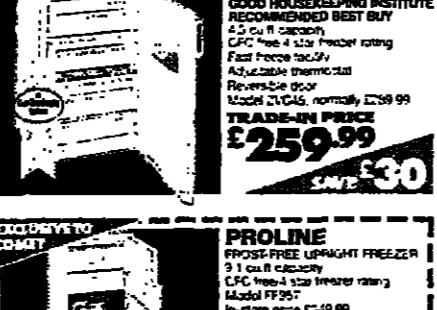
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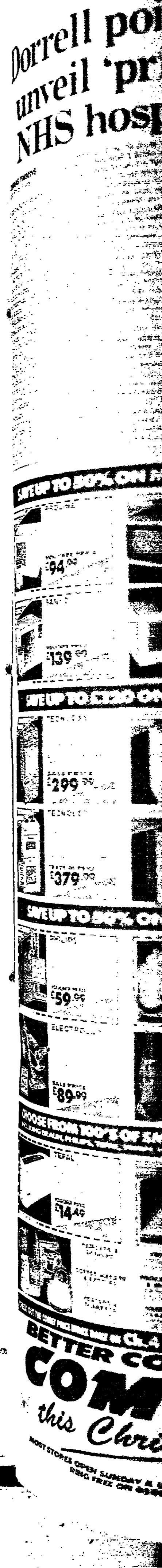
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Dorrell poised to unveil 'private' NHS hospitals

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The first schemes in which the private sector will design, build, finance and operate entire hospitals for the NHS are to be announced shortly – probably in the Budget – despite a renewed Labour charge that the Government is progressively privatising the NHS.

But in a keynote speech, in which he is expected to underline that private finance is to be the dominant way that new NHS facilities are built, Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, is expected to set limits to the exercise.

In his address to the Royal College of Physicians next week, Mr Dorrell will say that core clinical services – broadly those provided by doctors and nurses – will not be included in the new schemes.

Some clinical support services which involve doctors – pathology and radiology – will form part of the early private finance deals in the NHS, which include a £100m 700-bed rede-

velopment of the Norfolk and Norwich hospital, a £20m 150-bed unit at St James's hospital, Leeds, a £2m scheme for a new acute hospital at Bishop Auckland in County Durham, and a £16m redevelopment at two sites in south Buckinghamshire.

But with few private bidders showing any interest in supplying full clinical services, Mr Dorrell is to make a virtue of reality and rule out complete private provision of an NHS hospital for the time being.

His aim is to defuse renewed Labour charges that "core" hospital services are being privatised, with Alan Milburn, Labour's new health spokesman, yesterday listing 34 contracts under which services have been taken away from NHS provision and handed over to private companies.

The deals include pathology at the Leicestershire Mental Health Trust, some forms of radiology at Oldham and Park hospitals and ophthalmology in south Devon. The private sector has also won six contracts for sterile supplies, six for limb

fitting, four for occupational health and six for patient appliances. A big new deal involving private provision of pathology for hospitals in north London is also thought to be near completion.

"Bit by bit, the health service

is being handed over to the private sector," Mr Milburn said.

"Yesterday it is pathology and tomorrow it will be paediatrics."

The limit Mr Dorrell will set will still leave the private sector providing, financing and running entire buildings – everything except mainstream treatment – providing all the back-up services from laundry and cleaning to building maintenance and security, together with a range of other functions.

Kingsley Manning, managing director of Newchurch, which runs a private finance database for the NHS Executive, said an "explosion" of private building was about to occur, with the likelihood that £2bn worth of schemes would be in the pipeline by the time of the next general election.

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Tradition under threat: Fishermen claim licence charges will hurt livelihood



Fish run: Den Chadwick, an Exe netsman, prepares his equipment as his family has done for centuries

Photograph: Tom Pilston

Salmon families get sinking feeling

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

The 18 families which carry on the traditional pursuit of netting salmon on the river Exe in Devon claim they will be forced out by a huge hike in fees proposed by the National Rivers Authority.

The salmon are netted near Topsham, a village that centuries ago was a major port and fishing centre but is now a commuter suburb of Exeter. The salmon fishing is regarded as one of the few remaining links with the village's historical past.

Many of the families have fished for generations. Now, though, the NRA proposes to increase the licence fee from

£120 a year to £1,619 in a move to regulate charges nationally.

The increases will be phased in, but the fishermen say the living to be made is already precarious and the new fee will make it uneconomic.

Den Chadwick, secretary of River Exe Netsmen, said not all

fishermen were as lucrative as others and the NRA policy to have national charges was flawed.

The NRA claims large increases are needed because the Government has nearly halved its

national fisheries grant in the last four years and wants the

costs of the service to be recovered as fully as possible from those who benefit.

Mr Chadwick said: "Our fish-

ing is vitally important, not only financially, but because it is a way of life for many families and has been so for hundreds of years. This is part of our heritage and if these charges go through, that history will be wiped out."

He remembers 1987 as a good year with 4,000 fish caught, but last year, few boats averaged more than 100 fish.

With the possible income so

variable he believes few will

commit themselves to the cost

of a new licence.

Also, salmon farming has

meant that prices for salmon

have not risen in the last 10

years. "I have been fishing here

for 45 years. There used to be

a waiting list, but not anymore. I will be fishing next year because it is a way of life for many families and has been so for hundreds of years. This is part of our heritage and if these charges go through, that history will be wiped out."

There are already tight rules

governing the fishing and a

suspicion among the netsmen

that many with vested interests

would prefer to see them off the

river and their places taken by

more lucrative "rod and line"

fishermen who pay well and

catch little – a charge the NRA

proposals say.

The season runs from Febr-

uary to August and fishing can

only take place on weekdays.

One fisherman stands on

shore with a rope, while a boat

rows out trailing a net. When

the boat lands this forms a half

circle, which is dragged in.

Hopefully the salmon are

trapped in the net.

The River Exe Netsmen say

they believe the spawning beds

of the salmon 40 miles up river

on Exmoor would suffer if the

netting stopped, because too

many salmon would be trying to

breed. They claim the netting is

a valuable culling that safe-

guards future fish stocks. The

fishermen also have a role in dis-

couraging poachers.

They have been in touch

with counterparts in Cornwall

and hope other similar bodies

will join forces to try and over-

turn the NRA proposals.

Care to be improved for victims of crime

GLENDA COOPER

New guidelines for treating the victims of crime will be issued to doctors and nurses after some complained they were treated unsympathetically.

Home Office research has shown that less than 50 per cent of violent crime is reported to the police and for many victims their only contact with the authorities is when they receive treatment for their injuries.

Victims have complained that they were treated in an insensitive or judgmental way, adding to their distress.

The booklet gives a checklist for doctors, including documenting injuries, looking for signs of sexual assault and safeguarding clothing that may be necessary for forensic evidence.

It also lists possible signs of domestic violence, how to make a written report, the effect of post-traumatic stress disorder and who is most likely to be at risk of different crimes.

At the launch of the booklet, *Treating Victims of Crime*, which will be issued free to all GPs and accident and emergency departments, the charity Victim Support yesterday outlined some cases where the victim's ordeal had been exacerbated by the treatment they had received from medical staff.

A woman store detective who had been stabbed by a thief who said the hypodermic needle was infected with AIDS was then told by her doctor to "pull herself together" and given no information.

A young man seriously injured in an armed robbery was told by his GP that the consultant who had dealt with him had written on the discharge note that "the victim had provoked the attack by challenging the robber".

The director of Victim Support, Helen Reeves, said: "There are many victims who never tell anyone what has happened to them but they do seek medical help. It is essential that these people are treated with sensitivity and understanding and that they are told what other sources of help are available to them."

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international

Presidential poll in Algeria: Massive operation mounted to prevent Islamist suicide bombers wrecking today's election

Algiers smothered in blanket of security

ROBERT FISK
Algiers

"If they're going to do something, they'll do it today," Commandant Mohamed of Algeria's Gendarmerie Nationale said it without emotion, as if making a station announcement or foretelling uncertain weather.

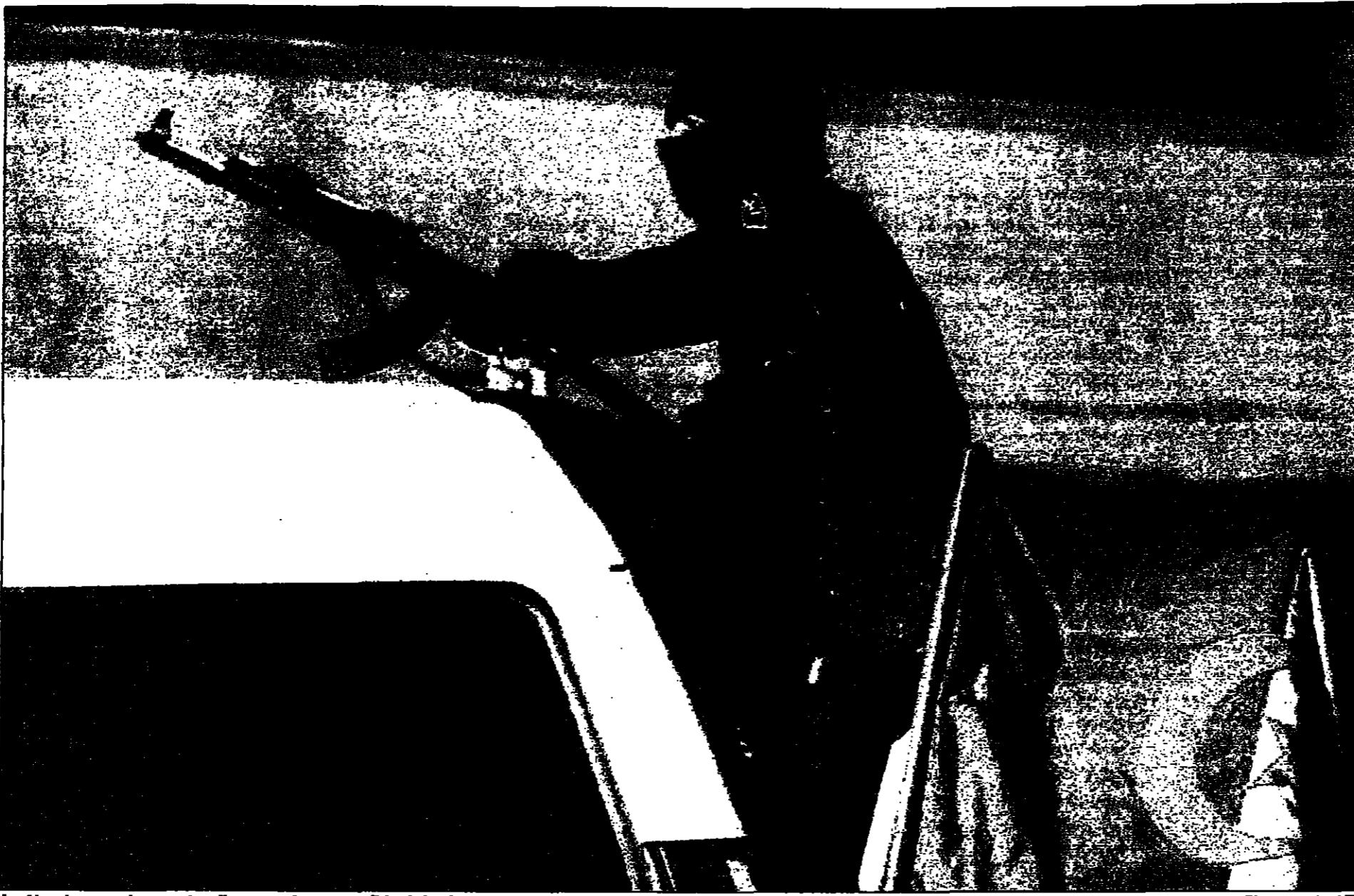
The two policemen in the jeep with us checked their Kalashnikovs and stared through the windows. Algiers looked a pretty, deceptive city, all sunlight and *pièce noir* apartments and balconies floating above the Mediterranean, the walls smeared with election posters to remind us of why the day before polling could be the day that the Armed Islamic Group did something.

We pulled to the side of the motorway near Harrache for a routine shake-down. Young men driving cars and vans were ordered out by the roadside, hands above their heads, papers checked, vehicles prodded over by the gendarmerie. A phalanx of armoured jeeps pulled up behind, their green-uniformed occupants running up the motorway embankments, spilling over into the ground beyond.

By the time I reached them, two officers were looking suspiciously at an abandoned ground-floor apartment. Commandant Mohamed looked at two gas cylinders standing beside the entrance. "Who put them there?" he asked. "Could be a bomb. Why would anyone leave valuable things like gas cylinders sitting outside an abandoned home? What are they going to be used for?"

A gendarme peered at the bottles and shrugged. A couple of gas cylinders outside a Harrache flat didn't make an insurrection on the day before Algeria's presidential election. It was almost noon, and the flood of supposed Islamist suicide bombers had definitely not put in an appearance; in fact, it was security that was flooding Algiers — police and paramilitaries and soldiers and plainclothes men on every street corner, every highway intersection. Soaked in security might be the right expression.

"I think things are better than when you were last here — people are tired of terrorism and they want to collaborate with the security forces more



Photograph: AFP

An Algerian gendarme standing guard at a roadblock in the Algiers suburb of Kouba on the eve of the election

than they did," Commandant Mohamed said. "The *garde communale* [volunteer militiamen] have been a great success. People are not afraid to show their feelings against the fundamentalists now. People feel more patriotic." There was no doubt whose side the good commandant was on. Policemen admire Liamine Zeroual, the president who is going to be re-elected today.

We cruised the streets for another half hour, past the near-

deserted French embassy and the equally abandoned home of Abassi Madani, leader of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front. Near Bir Mouradis we were waved down by some of Commandant Mohamed's colleagues. One was holding a dirty, slightly rusted pistol. "He found it in that car," he said, pointing down the motorway to where two men — one in a business suit, the other in a black leather jacket — stood guiltily beside a black VW Golf. "He

says he works for the Ministry of Justice, but he doesn't have a permit for the gun." The pistol was light-weight but old, a Chinese 9mm. The metal felt grainy, as if it had just been dug up in a garden — which is evidently what the police officer suspected.

Commandant Mohamed chatted to the better-dressed driver. He had an identification card showing he had permission to use the Club des Pins, the old *nomenklatura* watering hole

outside Algiers; which clearly did not satisfy the commandant's definition of a "terrorist".

Exactly what did was more evident back in the Harrache barracks, where a chart of the gendarmerie's "anti-terrorist struggle" lists an impressive number of Armed Islamic Group (GIA) cells broken, its members killed or arrested, some of them — as the chart significantly recorded — bank of officials or doctors or intellectuals.

Between 24 April and last month, in the Harrache area alone, six "terrorists" were shown as dead, 30 arrested, including the local technocrat leader, Mourid Sellam.

Police archives record much more fascinating details. Of a group called al-Fida, which coordinates the assassination of intellectuals, files showed that one group specialised in money and communications.

Its members — a former tax inspector (a certain Rashid Medani), a bank teller who was playing the international exchanges, a shopkeeper rejoicing in the name of Dumdad Boualem and an estate agent renting to other comrades sent faxes from an architect's home to Paris, Brussels and London.

One GIA fax to Britain this summer was addressed to an Algerian called Mohamed Denideni (occupation unknown), while others co-ordinated the purchase of cars for

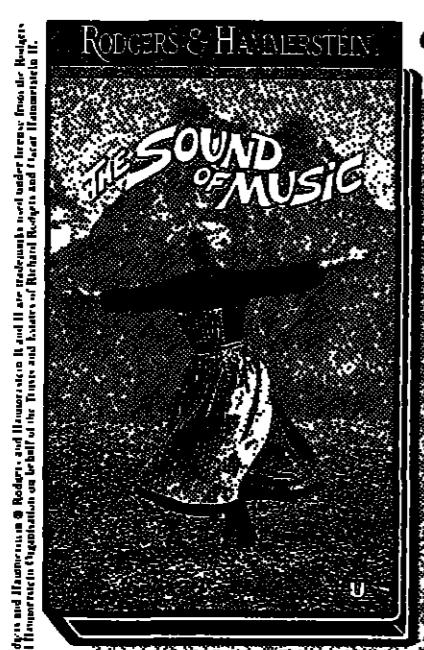
the transport of explosives, cash and men. Yes, the GIA are no longer stealing cars — they are buying them, fitting out members with the real identification papers of long-dead citizens; the GIA has made a habit of seeking information about women whose babies died at birth — and adopting the identity of the dead children 21 years later, a kind of delayed rebirth for anyone seeking anonymity in the streets of Algiers.

But just who owned the white Renault 19 we heard about off the motorway at Dely Ibrahim, we still don't know.

Commandant Mohamed's radio told the story succinctly. "It saw our checkpoint and turned round," the message said. "Why didn't you shoot at it?" "We did, but it got away." We raced down the ring-road. Algiers was being sealed off from the countryside, the police forming a *cordon sanitaire* for election day. The Renault had tried to break into the city. We reached the junction that not far from Chaibia — a village where the commandant and I were ambushed by the GIA last March and there was the gendarme who had fired a machine-gun at the car.

"He went down there," he said, and pointed to a winding hill road. We chased after it, avoiding the man-hole covers — people put bombs under them — and breaking whenever we saw blue-uniformed city police patrols or soldiers. "Did you see a Renault 19 going through here at speed?" Commandant Mohamed would ask. And they all said they hadn't. We crunched up side roads, looking for suspiciously parked white cars. Every street, every intersection seemed to be filled with white Renault 19s. And we were watched all the time by crowds of idle, interested young men.

Of course, we never found the car. It had made a getaway back into the country. "Maybe he was a car bomb — we don't know," Commandant Mohamed said. "They are the greatest danger now. They are the only danger, but we're successful so far." By late afternoon, a phone call reached his office from downtown. "Nothing at all," Commandant Mohamed beamed with delight. Then, just to keep bad luck away, he added: "So far."



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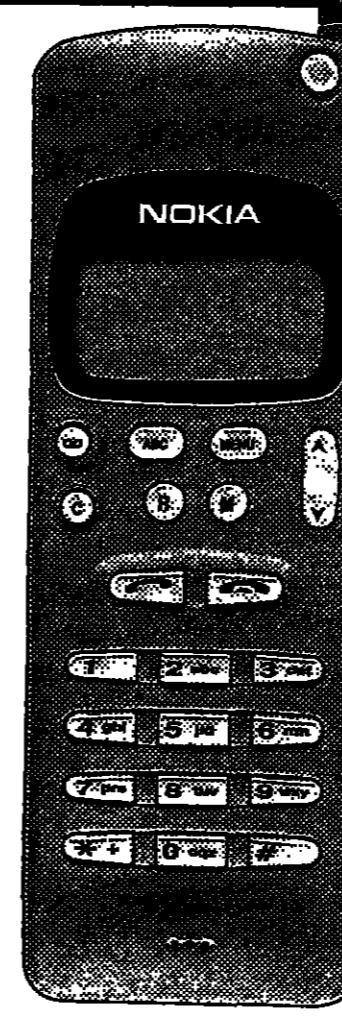
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UN judge takes aim at Yugoslav warlords

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

The United Nations war crimes tribunal for former Yugoslavia is expected to issue another indictment today, capping a week in which it has taken aim at some of the highest-ranking Serb and Croat commanders in the conflicts. Brushing aside Serb and Croat complaints that this may derail peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, the tribunal is giving notice that political considerations will not deflect it from the application of universal principles of justice.

"What politicians have the moral, legal or political right to forgive people charged with genocide and crimes against humanity, the deaths of tens of thousands of people, without consulting the victims? I just find it abhorrent," the chief UN prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, said on Tuesday in The Hague, where the tribunal is based.

The war crimes under investigation are the worst committed in Europe since 1945, and include the Serb killing of 260 Croats in Vukovar in 1991, and the Serb slaughter of thousands of Muslims near Srebrenica last July, and Croat atrocities against Muslims in central Bosnia in 1993.

All those indicted so far are Serbs or Croats, although one Muslim commander from eastern Bosnia, Naser Oric, has been unofficially tipped as a possible suspect.

Officials at the tribunal have indicated they want the long arm of international justice to extend as high as possible up the ladder of the Serbian leadership in Belgrade. In theory, this could mean naming President Slobodan Milosevic, an act that would severely test the world's determination to back the tribunal, as the Serbian leader's co-operation is deemed vital to securing a peace settlement in former Yugoslavia.

A list of the tribunal's suspects reads like a roll-call of the Bosnian Serb, Croatian Serb and Bosnian Croat leaderships of the last four years. Those charged include four Serbs who directed the war effort in Bosnia and Croatia - Radovan Karadzic, General Ratko Mladic, Milan Martic and General Mile Mrksic - as well as two Bosnian Croat leaders, Dario Kordic and General Tihomir Blaskic.

However, there is one problem. Out of 52 suspects, including 45 Serbs and seven Croats, the tribunal has custody of only one, a Bosnian Serb

karate instructor, Dusan Tadic, whose trial is expected to start early next year.

The tribunal, strongly supported by the United States, says it expects the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian governments to surrender all suspects in their territories. But Croatia's President, Franjo Tudjman, treated the tribunal to a gesture of contempt on Tuesday by giving General Blaskic a job in Croatia's army inspectorate only a day after he had been charged with war crimes against Muslims in central Bosnia.

The move was a slap in the face to Bosnia's Muslim-led government and underlined the ease with which the Croats switch between military, political and administrative positions in Croatia and the Croat-controlled Bosnia. The Muslims and Croats signed an agreement in Ohio earlier this month on strengthening co-operation in Bosnia, but the accord looks somewhat hollow in the light of the protection extended by Mr Tudjman to a leading war-crimes suspect.

The US ambassador to Zagreb, Peter Galbraith, warned Croatia yesterday that the treatment of General Blaskic would be an important factor weighing on US relations with Croatia. "The only appointment Mr Blaskic can legally have now is with the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague," the ambassador said.

The Ohio negotiations could run into even deeper trouble over the fate of Mr Karadzic and General Mladic, whom the US and the Bosnian government want removed from power and brought to trial as part of a peace deal. The official Bosnian Serb news service, quoting a source in the Bosnian Serb leadership, said this week that the two men would not withdraw from politics after peace was achieved.

The Belgrade magazine *Nin* reported last weekend that Mr Milosevic had secured the two men's agreement to make a "quiet departure" from public life in return for not being handed over to the UN tribunal. But the US government has flatly rejected any such deal, saying the indictments are not negotiable.

For his part, Mr Goldstone made clear this week that he and his staff would consider resigning rather than see such important suspected war criminals as Mr Karadzic and General Mladic escape trial.

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Six leading war-crimes suspects from Bosnia and Croatia wanted by the UN tribunal



Name: Radovan Karadzic
Job: Bosnian Serb political leader
Present address: Somewhere in Bosnian Serb territory
Date of indictment: 25 July 1995
Charge: Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Specifically, he is accused of atrocities perpetrated against civilians throughout Bosnia, including the sniping campaign against residents of Sarajevo. He is also accused of taking UN peace-keepers hostage as human shields.



Name: Ratko Mladic
Job: Military commander of the Bosnian Serbs
Present address: Somewhere in Bosnian Serb territory
Date of indictment: 25 July 1995
Charge: Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Specifically, he is accused of crimes against Bosnian civilians and UN peace-keepers. Accusations include the shelling of a busy cafe area in Tuzla last May and seizure of 284 UN troops this summer in Pale and Gorazde.



Name: Tihomir Blaskic
Job: Bosnian Croat military commander. He was appointed last Tuesday to be head of inspector in Croatia's army.
Present address: Normally in Bosnian Croat territory, he is now presumed to be heading for Zagreb.
Date of indictment: 13 November 1995
Charge: Crimes relate to the firing of cluster bombs into central Zagreb last May. The Croatian Serbs launched their rocket attacks on Zagreb, killing six people, as the Croatian army successfully captured the Serb-held enclave of western Slavonia.



Name: Milan Martic
Job: Civilian political leader of the breakaway Croatian Serb mini-state
Present address: Normaly in Bosnian Croat territory, he is now presumed to be heading for Zagreb.
Date of indictment: 25 July 1995
Charge: Crimes against humanity related to the persecution of Bosnian Muslims on political, racial and religious grounds. The indictment accuses him of such large-scale destruction that almost the entire civilian Muslim population of the Lasva valley in central Bosnia was destroyed in 1993.



Name: Dario Kordic
Job: Deputy civilian political leader of self-proclaimed Bosnian Croat mini-state
Present address: Somewhere in Croat-held territory
Date of indictment: 13 November 1995
Charge: Crimes against humanity. Accused of involvement in the massacre of 261 Croats and non-Serbs after the capture of the Croat town of Vukovar in November 1991. The officers are said to have removed the men from the hospital, then taken them to a site near a farm for execution.



Name: Mile Mrksic
Job: Serbian officer, later commander of Croatian Serb forces
Present address: Last heard of in Serb-held Bosnia
Date of indictment: 9 November 1995
Charge: Crimes against humanity. Accused of involvement in the massacre of 261 Croats and non-Serbs after the capture of the Croat town of Vukovar in November 1991. The officers are said to have removed the men from the hospital, then taken them to a site near a farm for execution.

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EU integration: Proposals could prompt a showdown with Britain

Unity route charted by Paris and Bonn

SARAH HELM
Bonn

Germany and France are preparing a four-point plan for the next round of European integration, including proposals for a single European foreign policy and a call for more immigration and asylum powers to be handed over to Brussels.

It is an attempt to patch up the Paris-Bonn relationship, historically the driving force for European integration. But wide areas of disagreement persist, giving room for Britain to exploit the differences.

The initiative is to be unveiled next month in an attempt to revive the debate over how the European Union should tackle the next phase of reform. Given the failure of other member-states to set a clear agenda, the Franco-German plan is likely to form a negotiating blueprint for next year's "Maastricht Two" inter-governmental conference on EU re-structuring. The plan, agreed in outline this week, could set France and Germany back on a collision course with Britain, which had been given

cause to believe that the drive towards integration was slowing down.

It can take some comfort from the fact that the initiative is not as federalist in its ambitions as Bonn would have liked. Germany is determined to ensure Europe moves towards greater political and monetary union on grounds that without a single political vision, Europe may not create sufficient stability for a single currency to work.

But French caution over certain German policy proposals forced Bonn to scale down its original demands. "It is a compromise. It goes further than the French would have wanted but not as far as we would have liked," said a German official.

The Franco-German proposals centre on foreign policy, immigration and border controls, institutional reform and EU democracy and openness. They will be finalised after the Franco-German summit on 7 December.

On foreign-policy integration, the two countries want a new planning unit established within the Council of Ministers

secretariat in Brussels. France wants the EU to appoint a secretary-general for foreign policy but Germany has not so far agreed. The core of the agreed plan is for greater majority voting on foreign policy within the Council of Ministers. Under German proposals, majority-voting would be extended, starting with "the most important" areas of EU foreign policy. However, France continues to resist this idea and negotiations are still under way to find a compromise formula.

Under the proposed new voting system, a single country which objected to the majority decision would not be able to block it but would not have to take part in implementation of the decision under what is termed "constructive abstention". The financing of the policy agreed by the majority would, however, come out of EU funds.

Germany also wants to give more decision-making power to the European Commission in areas of immigration and asylum where they believe better coordination between member states is vital. The Commission would



Window shopping: Any crackdown on illegal foreign prostitutes, who make up most of Amsterdam's window trade, would not be welcomed by local businessmen

The red lights could be out all over Amsterdam

ABI DARUVALLA
Amsterdam

If a strike of Amsterdam prostitutes goes ahead next month it won't be only the red light which will go out in the city's famous sex district.

The brothel operators behind the sex strike are angry over a council crackdown on illegal immigrants working as whores. Local businesses are also afraid such a move would spell the end of the allure of the area and have pledged support for the "lights out" protest.

The crackdown on illegal foreign prostitutes is part of the city's policy to regulate brothels in advance of new legislation to decriminalise the sex industry. As from 1 January, brothel operators in Amsterdam will have to apply for a "tolerance licence" allowing them to ply their trade, as long as certain health and safety regulations are met.

While the brothel operators are not against this policy, they are furious about what they see as a totally impossible demand which calls on them to ensure that no illegal immigrants

are employed as prostitutes.

"About 75 per cent of the city's 1,300 window prostitutes are foreign girls who are in the Netherlands illegally," said a spokesman for SOR, representing the brothel operators.

There has been a flood of prostitutes into Amsterdam over the last few years, mainly from South America and more recently, from eastern Europe.

SOR says: "This has built up over the last decade and they can't expect us to throw these women out onto the street just like that."

The whole red light district would collapse - which is why other local businesses like local cafes are prepared to join our protest action and turn off their lights."

But Amsterdam council is adamant that the brothel operators are responsible for stamping out illegal employment.

"The fact that they don't know how to handle the problem is their problem, not ours. Illegal is illegal and we can't make an exception for prostitutes," says a council spokesman.

But he stressed that the authorities are not planning to

hunt out illegal immigrants working as prostitutes. The council is, however, determined to ensure all the conditions required for "tolerance permits" are met.

SOR insists they do not want preferential treatment but a more realistic approach to the problem and time to "clean up our act".

They warn too that the council's tough stance will only succeed in forcing the illegal foreign prostitutes further into the back streets and criminal circles.

What SOR would like to see is a temporary amnesty for these women allowing them to work for the industry for a year.

Turning a blind eye to the city's flourishing sex industry is a long-standing tradition in Amsterdam but the huge influx of illegal foreign women on the circuit has caused concern because of links with organised crime.

Accepting the existence of the oldest profession in the world is one thing but giving brothels an official stamp of approval has been a difficult step - even for the progressive Dutch.

Juppé's attack on benefits delights the right

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The French health and social security system, one of the most generous and costly in Europe, is to undergo two years of sweeping change to end its indebtedness, streamline its functioning and reduce inequities.

The measures presented to parliament yesterday by the prime minister, Alain Juppé, were hailed as one of the most ambitious reforms of the system in its 50 years of existence. The financial markets were delighted with the tough social security measures. Shares and government bonds soared, thanks to hopes that a tighter fiscal policy would allow interest rate cuts. The franc rose to Ff3.45 to the German mark.

The proposed reforms, which were to be the subject of a vote of confidence yesterday, affect the whole administrative structure of the health and social security system, known as the Sécu, as well as the way the system works. No one in France will be untouched.

Some of the most immediate effects will be in the provision of health care, the sector running up the highest debts. As from next year, a ceiling is to be set on spending by hospitals and doctors, and the 19 different national health insurance schemes are to be streamlined. The homeless and jobless, who have risked falling out of the system, will receive automatic cover. But in a clear concession to the right, only foreigners legally resident in France will qualify.

A patient's right to choose from an almost infinite range of GPs will be limited; another outcome could be a reduction in the incomes of the highest-earning doctors. Of more than 60 MPs who took part in the debate which preceded Mr Juppé's statement this week, more than 30 were from the medical profession. But it was noted that they were unusually reticent on the question of earnings.

The most universal of Mr Juppé's measures is a new tax, introduced for 13 years at a rate of 0.5 per cent on an individual's total income, which is earmarked for paying off the Sécu's debt. The debt, estimated at 230bn francs (£30bn) — a sum contested by Mr Juppé's opponents — has been run up since 1991. From 1997 the Sécu is expected to pay for itself, but the structure will be overhauled.

The present autonomy of the Sécu, funded mostly by workers' and employers' contributions, and managed by a council made up of doctors, trade unions and employers, is to be ended. In future the system will be overseen by a national council answerable to parliament, which will set the structure.

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In proposing a greater role for parliament, however — and in his bravura performance at the French equivalent of the dispatch box, where he turned in his best rhetorical performance since the Chirac election campaign — Mr Juppé successfully defused many of the objections the legislature had threatened.

The main battle now will be with the trade unions and the public sector. That might have to be fought on the streets.

far and t

US pushes for a Pacific defence union

OJ's lawyer beats his rival again

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War and terror make 27 million homeless

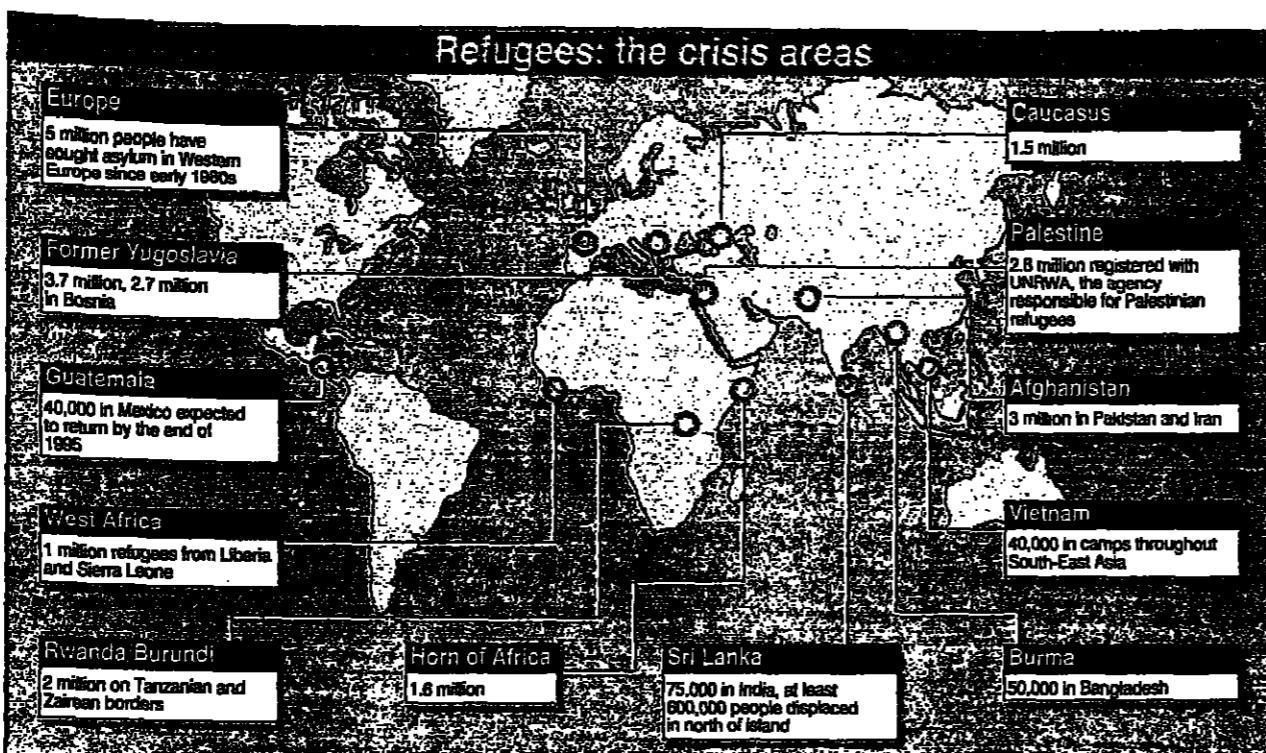
MICHAEL SHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

A record total of 27 million people around the world have fled their homes because of war and persecution, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said yesterday as she called for new political thinking to prevent conflicts and to deal with the changing character of war and displacement, as some states disintegrate and others pursue policies of ethnic chauvinism.

"We live in a sophisticated world but we are responding in a patchy and short-sighted way," said Mrs Ogata, introducing a report by the UNHCR. Among the facts and figures collected last year were:

- Four countries — Germany, Pakistan, Iran and Zaire — are each hosting more than a million refugees and 28 nations are coping with more than 100,000 people.
- The three countries with the most refugees are Afghanistan, Rwanda and Liberia, with 2.74 million Afghans still living as refugees 16 years after the Soviet Union invaded, and 2.26 million Rwandans in exile.
- Germany has taken in the greatest number (700,000) from the former Yugoslavia granted "temporary protection" in other European countries, while only a fraction are in Britain.
- World-wide, there are more refugees in Africa, 6.75 million, than in any other continent.

The UNHCR's most important message is not one of fig-



tures but trends. The refugee agency, with a \$1.3bn budget, has had to alter definitions of those in need as it copes with the end of the Cold War.

Traditionally, a refugee was somebody who crossed an international border and sought asylum in another state, such as Palestinians who fled to Jordan and Lebanon in 1948. But civil conflicts and the breakup of such states as Somalia and Yugoslavia has created a new cat-

egory of victim, christened "internally displaced persons", people trapped within their own borders but in need.

The repercussions of such catastrophes challenge the vintage Cold War doctrine that the outside world cannot intervene in the affairs of nation states.

The UN Secretary General, Boutros Ghali, has admitted that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed". The breakdown

was recognised when the UN Security Council passed Resolution 688 in 1991, demanding that Iraq allow "immediate access" by international humanitarian organisations. But the members of the UN have not faced up to the difficult political consequences of this action.

Mrs Ogata cited the mass murders and ethnic conflict in Rwanda as a textbook case of the need for prevention.

"What might have happened

if the estimated \$2bn spent on refugee relief during the first two weeks of the emergency had been devoted to keeping the peace, protecting human rights and promoting development in the period which preceded the exodus?" the report asked. The UNHCR wants to see fewer expensive "quick fix" solutions and a greater long-term commitment to preventive diplomacy.

There is growing resistance in many Third World countries to



All gone: A young Hutu in Kibeho camp weeping as water and food are cut off. Photograph: David Guttenfelder

US pushes for a Pacific defence union

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Osaka

Leaders of the main Pacific Rim economies begin meeting here today, a day after William Perry, the US Defense Secretary, suggested that the divided membership of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) forum consider forming a security alliance.

"It is possible to expand Apec into an organisation that can take up security problems," he said. "This could act as a foundation for building mutual confidence in Asia." The suggestion provided an unexpected beginning to the gathering. The third full summit of Apec was always going to be lively. At the weekend, South Korea threatened to cancel President Kim Young Sam's summit with the Japanese Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama, after one of Mr Murayama's ministers made off-the-record remarks justifying the occupation of Korea.

The next day, in Seoul, China's President, Jiang Zemin, and Mr Kim denounced Japanese wartime cruelty. To add to Tokyo's problems, President Bill Clinton nearly cancelled due to the US budget crisis.

In the end, the Japanese minister resigned and Mr Clinton arranged to arrive in Osaka a day late and leave early. The show will go on; what it will achieve is another question.

Apec was inaugurated in 1989 and annual meetings of ministers and heads of government culminated last year in the ambitious Bogor Declaration, which set out the aim of free trade in the Asia-Pacific area by 2010, or by 2020 for developing economies.

The Pacific Rim is the world's most powerful trading region. Apec's 18 members conduct 40 per cent of world trade; a report yesterday predicted that their collective economies could

grow by 20 per cent by the end of the century. But their economic policies are not co-ordinated. The Association of South-East Asian Nations groups seven economies; Japan and the United States have long-standing trade relationships. But there is nothing to compare with the European Union or the North American Free Trade Area.

Cynics say the Apecarians are too diverse. In Europe, there is anxiety about the difference between Germany and Portugal. In Apec, it is intended that the free trade will eventually flourish between the US and Papua New Guinea.

There are also diplomatic and military tensions: the ressentiment of Japan by its former Asian conquests; the trade disputes between Japan and the US; and the expansionist fears inspired by China. The Apec absurdity is epitomised by the presence in Osaka this week of Taiwan. To avoid upsetting China, it is referred to in official literature as "Chinese Taipei".

Diplomatic differences, however, have focused on another dispute, mundane, but more central to Apec's economic raison d'être. The aim of the 1995 meeting is the formulation of an "Action Agenda", to which member states will contribute concessions and proposals in Manila next year. Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan want an exemption in the case of agriculture. The big food exporters, the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, insist that to agree tariffs on everything but rice undermines the principles of the organisation.

The rift is an embarrassment for Japan, which wants a clear outcome to its first summit as Apec host. A compromise on rice tariffs will be the main task of the next four days. Even if it is reached, Mr Perry's talk of "mutual confidence" will remain a long-term vision.

The Pacific Rim is the world's

OJ's lawyer beats his rival again

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

He beat her in court and now Johnnie Cochran has bested Marcia Clark in the book deal sweepstakes. The fast-talking attorney who secured the acquittal of O.J. Simpson has won a book contract for "slightly" more than the \$2m (£1.8m) advance obtained by Ms Clark, the lead prosecution lawyer.

"Let's just say we won again," the Los Angeles Times quoted a friend of Mr Cochran's as remarking about the contract for his memoirs, to be published in 1997 and reportedly titled *My Journey to Justice: The Autobiography of Johnnie Cochran Jr.*

The book will be published by Ballantine's Our World, a specialist in books about black Americans. "I want to remind people that he's still for justice."

is never ending and that one person can make a difference," the newspaper was told by Mr Cochran, who will be in Britain this weekend to address a conference of black lawyers.

The deal lifts the literary luster from the trial to even more stratospheric levels. The Clark and Cochran deals are among the biggest advances ever paid for non-fiction, apart from General Colin Powell's \$6.5m and General Norman Schwarzkopf's \$5m. Robert Shapiro and Christopher Darden, defense and prosecution attorneys also in the Simpson case have each received \$1.5m advances for books of their own.

The only person not to benefit thus far is Mr Simpson. His reported post-trial pickings are a mere \$500,000, from photo rights to his homecoming party after his acquittal.

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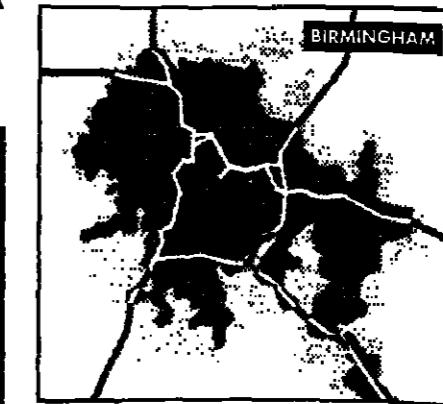
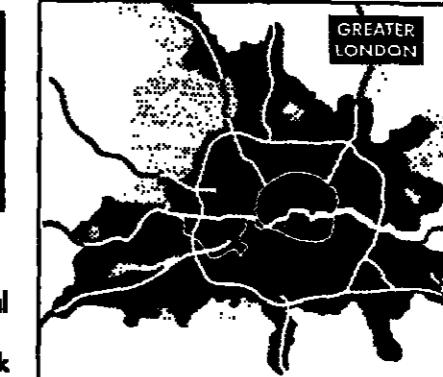
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Shell to go ahead with Nigerian gas plant

NICHOLAS SCHOON

Shell and the Nigerian government yesterday decided to go ahead with a huge gas project in the troubled and environmentally damaged Niger delta.

The board of the joint venture company planning the £2.5 billion liquefied natural gas plant made the decision in Lagos yesterday. Shell, which has the second largest shareholding after the Nigerian government, said it expected final contracts

to be signed with construction firms and gas purchasers by the end of the year.

There had been pressure on the company to abandon or delay the project after the executions of the Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other men from Ogoniland.

Critics said approval would lend support to the military regime which hanged them. But Dick van den Brook, a Shell International director, said last night: "You have to be clear about who would be hurt."

You don't necessarily affect the present Nigerian government because the revenues will not start flowing on this project until early next century."

John Major said on Sunday that the Government would be holding urgent talks with Shell to discuss the project, the largest single investment in sub-Saharan Africa.

A meeting took place between senior Shell executives and Foreign Office officials on Monday, but both sides now say

there was no question of the Government putting any pressure on the multinational oil company to end its involvement in the gas plant.

"It's their money, and it's up to them and their European partners to explain their decisions to the public," said a Foreign Office spokesman.

Lord Melchett, chairman of Greenpeace UK, said: "We think Shell should stop oil production in Nigeria altogether. Going ahead with this plant

sends completely the wrong signal to the regime - that it's business as usual." But the director of Friends of the Earth (FoE), Charles Secrett, would not condemn the investment decision. "We think that if Shell intends to carry on operating in Nigeria as it has in the past, then it should get out right now. It has to recognise its social and environmental obligations."

The problem for Shell's many critics is that its participation in the gas plant may reflect such

recognition, as well as the pursuit of profits. Eventually it would cut the environmentally-damaging flaring off and waste of Nigerian gas by 45 per cent, says Shell. It would also bring thousands of construction jobs to an impoverished region of an impoverished country.

Greenpeace and FoE are together planning a day of action in Britain against the Nigerian government and Shell at the weekend, along with other groups including Amnesty International.

A World Bank subsidiary, the International Finance Corporation, pulled out of the project hours after the nine executions in protest. But since it was only

expected to take a 2 per cent shareholding and loan \$100m, its withdrawal dealt only a minor blow.

Shell has more than 90 oil

wells and hundreds of miles of

pipelines in the 400 square

mile Ogoni area where half a

million people live. It was accused by Mr Saro Wiwa and others of causing environmental devastation there. Apart from the noisy, polluting gas flares there have been hundreds of oil spills which have polluted farmland and waterways.

Brussels - European Union foreign ministers will formally approve an arms embargo and other sanctions against Nigeria's military rulers next Monday, Reuter reports.

IN BRIEF

Spaniard joins race for top Nato post

Brussels - Denmark fought last night to keep its former foreign minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen in the running for the top job at Nato but support was emerging for the compromise candidacy of Spain's Foreign Minister, Javier Solana.

Nato ambassadors will discuss the issue today after France piqued at Washington's rejection of the Dutch candidate, Ruud Lubbers, refused to accept Mr Ellemann-Jensen. Mr Solana's name emerged after numerous defence and foreign ministers of the Western European Union praised him at a meeting in Madrid on Tuesday and the United States added its praise yesterday. Reuter

Former South Korean president held

Seoul - The former South Korean president Roh Tae-woo, in what may be his last few hours of freedom, was being interrogated late last night over his \$654m (£421m) slush funds as media reports said his arrest was imminent. Several newspapers carried headlines this morning reading "Mr Roh Arrested Today" and State television reported he would be arrested soon. Reuter

US confirms threats before Saudi bomb

Riyadh - The US embassy here received anti-Western threats before Monday's bombing that killed five Americans but did not make major security changes because Saudi Arabia was seen as "one of the safest" places in the world, the US ambassador said yesterday. The Islamic Movement for Change vowed to "exert all available means" to evict Western forces. AP

Reward increased for Tamil Tiger chief

Colombia - Police announced a fivefold increase in the reward for information leading to the capture of the commander of the rebel Tamil Tigers, Velupillai Prabhakaran. The reward is now 25 million rupees (£322,000), police chief Wickremasinghe Rajaguru told reporters. AP

Wales neck-and-neck with rival

Warsaw - President Lech Walesa and his former-Communist rival met in a crucial television debate last night with opinion polls showing they were neck-and-neck just days before Sunday's second-round presidential elections. A poll by the public CBOS institute showed that Mr Walesa was supported by 46 per cent of voters against 43 per cent for the challenger, Aleksander Kwasniewski, with 10 per cent undecided. The private Demoskop agency also put him ahead with 53 per cent to 47. Reuter

Killer put to death for \$5 murder

Potosi, Missouri - A man was executed by injection yesterday for beating his grandmother in a dispute over money and leaving her to die in her burning home in 1985. Robert Sidebottom, 33, who had been on death row since 1987, was executed at the Potosi Correctional Center after the Supreme Court turned down last-minute requests for a stay. Sidebottom confessed to beating his grandmother after she gave him \$5 - less than what he had demanded, prosecutors said. AP



Statue shutdown: A German tourist views the Statue of Liberty from afar after the lay-off of federal workers forced it to close to visitors

Photograph: AP

Time stands still during US budget deadlock

DAVID USBORNE
New York

As a large part of the United States government has sputtered to a halt this week, thanks to the continuing budget stand-off in Washington, so too has the infamous national debt clock above Times Square in Manhattan.

Installed six years ago by the late New York real estate developer, Seymour Durst, to

dramatise America's overspending habit, the digital clock, composed of 350 high-wattage bulbs, is usually a blur of accumulating numbers as \$10,000 a second is added to the total. Yesterday the count stayed frozen at \$4,985,567,071,200.

"We shut it off, because the government has closed down," explained the late developer's son, Douglas Durst. "Theoretically, the debt has stopped growing, even though the in-

terest on the debt has not stopped."

Roughly half of the federal government's employees, about 800,000 workers, have been put on indefinite leave and it is unclear whether they will be paid for the lost days. Meanwhile, government facilities ranging from passport offices to the national parks remain closed. Even surfers of the Internet are affected: all government "home pages" have been abandoned.

How long the debt clock will

stay stopped is anyone's guess. No further meetings were

scheduled between the Republican leadership in Congress and President Bill Clinton to try to resolve their differences on a new budget. Newt Gingrich, leader of the House of Representatives, conceded yesterday that talks between the two sides on Monday and Tuesday had made little progress. "I don't think we're an inch closer," he

said. His Democratic counterpart, Dick Gephardt, concurred: "It looks like this is going to be a pretty long siege."

While public reaction to the crisis is overwhelmingly one of frustration with politicians in general, President Clinton seems for now to be suffering the least damage, and may even be bolstering his overall position by refusing to accede to Republican demands for a programme to balance the budget

within seven years by deep cuts in popular medical and social service programmes.

According to a USA Today/CNN poll, 49 per cent of Americans are blaming the Republican Congress for the imbroglio, with only 26 per cent putting the primary blame on Mr Clinton, who favours a less savage approach to spending cuts, and balancing the budget over 10 years.

News Analysis, page 19

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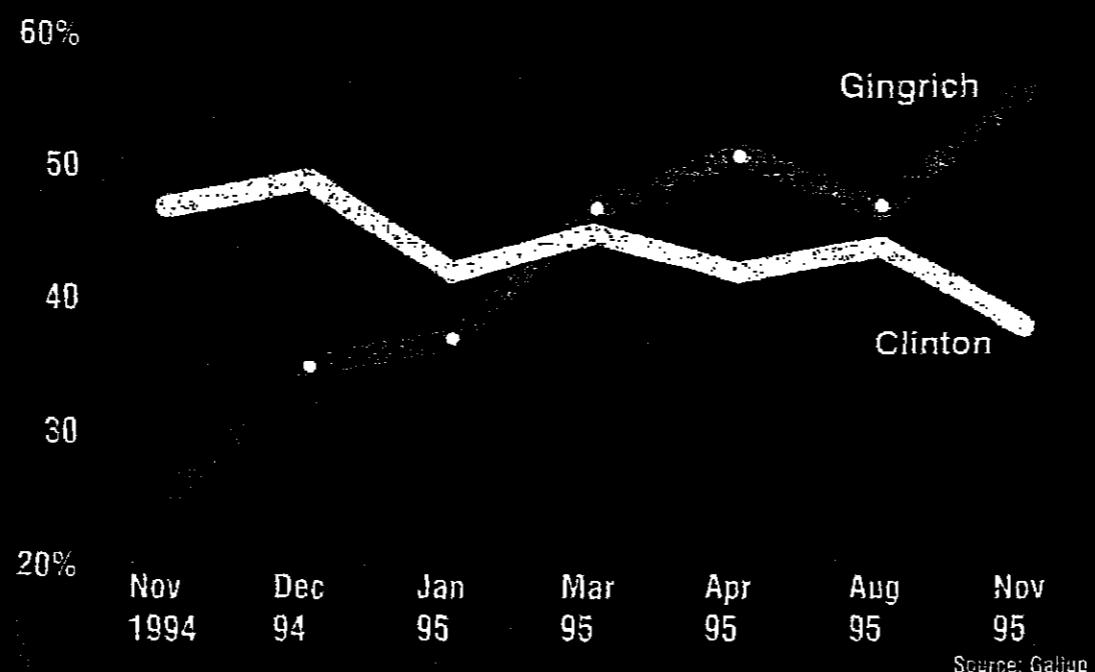
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High Noon in Washington

Disapproval rating



Source: Gallup

Rupert Cornwell describes the great showdown between warrior Newt Gingrich and healer Bill Clinton over their competing visions of America's future



In so many ways they are similar. Both are big men of a certain age, babyboomers with luxuriant silver thatches, just starting to run to seed. Both are southerners and products of dysfunctional families. Both are fodder for every armchair psychologist in the land. They are a quick and clever pair, who can talk the hind legs off a donkey. They adore advertising their intelligence, even if the price is a certain economy with the truth. Neither, though, is a paragon of moral rectitude, which is why neither is wholly trusted. And together they have arrived at the panacle of American politics – the first Democratic President in half a generation, and the Republicans who is the most powerful House Speaker in recent memory.

Today, however, in the great budget war of 1995, Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich are engaged in perhaps the defining combat of their political lives.

A government shutdown is an only-in-Washington affair. Elsewhere it might be the precursor of a coup. Here it is Kakaesque rite of autumn, happening on average every

couple of years (to be precise nine times since 1981), whenever Congress and the White House fail to agree on the budget. Normally, they end after a few hours, at most a few days. But 1995 may be different. Behind the childlike fingerwagging, the negotiation by insult that has most Americans yearning anew for Colin Powell and wondering what they did to deserve so malfunctioning a polity, huge and intertwined interests are at stake.

These include some of the most distinguished careers in Washington and quite possibly the presidency itself – but beyond even that, two competing visions of society. A year before he faces re-election, Clinton has established himself as defender of an old Democratic idea of America, tracing its roots to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Johnson's vision of a Great Society.

Ranged against it is the "Republican Revolution" of 1994 whose walking, talking embodiment is Gingrich.

The collision has been inevitable ever since 8 November last year, when the Republicans rode a wave of disgust

with business-as-usual in Washington to capture control of Congress for the first time in 40 years. For once, an American political party had a manifesto, the Contract with America, setting out the Republicans' plans to roll back government, return powers to the states and – though no one paid much attention at the time – to balance the federal budget in seven years. And for once, in Gingrich, a political party had a man absolutely determined to push its "contract" through.

In technical terms, the present impasse is a nightmare to explain: a jungle of such abstruse notions as continuing resolutions, 13 separate appropriations bills and Section B Medicare – not to mention contending expert budget projections stretching into the next millennium, which in fact may

offer ground for the compromise that must finally come. Peer through the forest and pick out the trees, though, and the struggle becomes clear cut, and titanic.

Behind the bickering lie two competing concepts of a government's role in society. Clinton's vetoes this week of bills that would have given the government temporary authority to borrow and spend money – and which have sent 800,000 federal workers home – were but a tiny foretaste of what is to come. Any day now we will get to the meat of the matter, the giant "reconciliation bill" which the Republicans are preparing to send to the White House, containing their plan to cut planned spending by \$1,000bn, and taxes by \$245bn, and balance the budget – all by 2002. Far more than a bill, this may

be the bible of the New Republicanism. Clinton will surely veto it on the spot. In doing so, he will set out the ground on which the 1996 election will be fought.

To measure the moment, consider what is in truth a sideshow to the main event: the predicament of Bob Dole.

Careers come scarcely more distinguished than his: senator for 27 years, minority leader, majority leader, presidential candidate in 1980 and 1988, and now favourite for the Republican nomination next year. But at his obligatory appearances with Gingrich to rail budget invertebrate on the White House, the majority leader's twitchy discomfort is plain to see. Left to a deal-making pragmatist such as Bob Dole, the dispute would long since have been settled.

Instead, he watches in the knowledge that his chances of victory in 1996 do not lie in his hands. He may be the Republican candidate, but Gingrich, not he, is Republicanism made flesh. And Gingrich, to put it mildly, is not loved.

A year after the 1994 election, political Washington may still be besotted by him. Not so the country at large, ever more alienated by the Gingrich that his devotees in the capital somehow overlook – the harsh voice that tears apart opponents as a pneumatic drill rips up asphalt, the lack of evident compassion for the needs of society, his doctrinaire glibness, on occasion his sheer silliness. Twelve months ago, he offered refreshing astuteness and new ideas. Now, more frequently, he gets on people's nerves. No US politician has

higher disapproval ratings. Congressional press room. Skilfully, he has defined the argument, playing upon fear and painting the Republicans in general, and Gingrich in particular, as extremist ideologues bent on destroying the Medicare and Medicaid federal health schemes for the elderly and the poor, removing the welfare safety net and doing away with basic work safety and environmental regulations – all for tax cuts that will benefit the rich. Clinton's tactics are working. By a margin of five to one, according to a poll yesterday, the public blames Congress rather than the President for the country's troubles.

But the equation may change if the deadlock continues. Until now, Clinton has got away with simply saying no. With the reconciliation bill, he will have to come up with ideas of his own.

So far at least, Clinton is winning. He has the advantage of being a single voice from the pulpit of the White House,

speaking "on behalf of the American people" – a far more potent formula than the multi-person Republican choir wheeled out to respond in the end of President Clinton.

Diary

JOHN WALSH



Hot news, if a little late, about the journalistic profession's own King Lear. Sir David English, editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers. Last Friday he turned up in Dorset, to accept an honorary DLitt from the University of Bournemouth (which, although it's one of those phomous-balmons new universities, boasts a BA degree course in the inky trade). Sir David's connections with the town are numerous: he was born there, went to school there, had his first job there ... and was nicked by the police there.

As he told the thunderstruck audience, it was all because of a scam invented by his paper. To expose the laxness of security on British Rail, the Bournemouth *Evening Echo* sent its quacking cub reporter to the local railway station with instructions to pinch a few mailbags from the platform and return with his trophies. Unbeknown to young David, the police had coincidentally decided, that very day, to clamp down on petty theft on local transport. Lying in wait, they were delighted to see an obvious

delinquent loading his van with purloined sacks, and arrested the miscreant on the spot. In court, English and the *Echo* were found guilty of "interfering with the Queen's Mail" and fined £10,000, a whacking sum in the mid-Fifties. With massive chutzpah, the paper headlined the story "Bournemouth man arrested for train robbery", without mentioning that it was the *Echo* that had sent him off to do so.

Left-Hand/Right-Hand Ignorance Dept. Sheridan Morley, the ebullient host of Radio 2's *Arts Show* and omniscient commentator on all things filmic, dramatic and showbizie, suffered an epic embarrassment this week. A month ago he was given the memoirs of Charlton Heston, *In the Arena*, to review for a Sunday newspaper, and panned it royally. Heaping scorn on the book, he

remained about Heston's stage performance in *A Man for All Seasons* (in which "the most moving thing about his performance as Sir Thomas More was, in fact, his hairstyle"), mocked the silver screen's Moses and concluded: "A terrible humourlessness pervades these memoirs ... he has never managed to shake off the image of a portentous head prefect." So far, so damning.

Picture, then, Sheridan's discomfiture on Monday morning, on learning that Charlton H was booked to appear as a guest on his radio show – yep, *Ben Hur* in person, sitting right there in front of him, seeking with indignation, with only a microphone between them. It was, I suspect, with some relief that Morley received a curt message from the great man's press agent: "Mr Heston found your review at best unhelpful, and will not now be appearing on your show."

A row with Charlton

The consumer magazine Which?, with its happy blend of shopping advice and ghastly case-studies of personal suffering, is always an amusing read, though I sometimes wonder if they make it up. Now I know different. Two friends of mine, Alison and Andrew, make a star appearance in the next issue because of a horrible experience in a restaurant.

The place was a new centre for African cuisine in Deansgate, Manchester, and, along with four friends, Alison and Andrew went there for a birthday supper. No tables appeared to be ready for them, although they were the only diners in the place. They ordered starters and mains and couscous then sat and waited. And waited. At length the first course arrived, but by the time midnight struck, the glories of African cuisine had still not

appeared, and one couple had to go home to their babysitter. When the dishes finally came, they were cold as the grave, and were sent back to be reheated. The prawns *rechauffées* moved from frozen to overcooked and were like cotton wool. The birthday party began to complain.

Then the bill was unceremoniously slapped on the table, service and all; it even included a charge for the couple who had decamped at midnight after eating nothing. The party refused to pay the full whack, and everything suddenly went ballistic. The female proprietor yelled abuse, then ran and locked the front door. She threatened to call the police but instead could be heard ringing a private "security firm".

Then, from below the kitchen, three burly African *plongeurs* surfaced and took up threatening positions around the restaurant, with all the charm of the Gimp in *Pulp Fiction*. It was not a happy scene. Just as my friends were wondering if they were going to be mashed into a mirepoix of bone and tissue, the police arrived. The birthday girl went home in tears, a final hail of imprecations ringing in her head.

The name of the restaurant is Jowita's. It translates as "Wealth of Hospitalities".

The British tradition of silly clubs is going strong. I've just heard of the Useless Information Club, whose 40 members (they include Keith Waterhouse and Godfrey Smith) met for the first time at L'Epicure last week. After dinner, each member had to rise and tell the company some completely unexciting piece of news, something that could not possibly assist them on their voyage down the information superhighway. Some items were considered too interesting to be acceptable, and were gonged off (such as Waterhouse's reminder that when *King Kong* was released in 1933, it went by the true *Xing Kong* in every country in the world except Sweden, where *kong* means "king" and the film was therefore titled *Kong King*). Later, another dines informed the gathering that his mother-in-law's name was Gertrude. Unable to think of a thing to do with this datum, they declared him a worthy winner.

Ageing juveniles and character actors were out in force at London's Theatre Museum on Tuesday to launch Philip Hoare's life of Noel Coward. Among the crush in the plush was Nickolas Grace, fresh from the final Urquhart saga on television. Peter Ackroyd, the famously sober and restrained novelist and biographer, Ned Sherrin, the chording impresario, and an anonymous female psychic who confided that it was her habit to send clay voodoo dolls through the post to people who displeased her. Various Maughams, effete young diarists, wheezing lavvies and even Jane Birkin's mum (the first person to sing "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square") wandered through the museum's stately rooms and bore down on the beaming author.

Mr Hoare was beaming because his five years' devoted work had been rewarded beyond his wildest dreams. Graham Payn, Coward's devoted friend and executor, had just presented him with Coward's beautiful wristwatch, a Longines number with a strap apparently of beaten gold. Unfortunately, from where I was standing, it seemed to be 25 minutes fast...

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Waiting for the Budget

The Queen does not fit the usual profile of a political hack, whose chief aim is to score points against political opponents. Not for them crowns, bugles and regal finery. They are normally seen in crumpled suits, bleary-eyed and slightly down at heel. Yet the head of state was called upon yesterday to play low politics. She had to set out the Government's big idea: to make Labour squirm.

Her speech to Parliament described a menu for the forthcoming session which ministers admit in private, has been chosen to give Labour indigestion. The crackdown on asylum-seekers and the benefits they receive is meant to make Labour look soft on immigration, it is called playing the race card. In a similar vein, the Government wants to shift the legal balance in favour of the prosecution by changing the rules on disclosure of evidence. It's the law and order card, aimed at showing that Labour is after all, soft on crime. Likewise, proposals to make it easier for schools to become grant-maintained will focus attention on Labour's dilemma: the party opposes GM schools, the establishments where some members of the Shadow Cabinet like to educate their children. Highlighting Labour's ideological confusions and lingering hypocrisy has considerable merit, but these measures have little additional purpose. Britain is not overrun by refugees. Guilty defendants do not routinely run rings around prosecutors. And it is already simple for a school to opt out, provided parents approve. The Government is wasting parliamentary time in the greater cause of getting itself re-elected.

Such tactics are deeply depressing, though hardly unexpected at this stage in the parliamentary cycle. Even in the determinedly strategic days of Margaret Thatcher, the Conservatives had a doc-

trine that nothing really radical could be pushed through the Commons except in the first couple of years after an election.

The compensation is that among the 16 Bills outlined yesterday there are several sensible measures. Legislation allowing disabled people to receive state cash to choose equipment and services for themselves is a great innovation: people with chronic conditions often know better than the experts how to meet their needs. The decision to allow the Health Service Ombudsman to investigate the clinical judgement of doctors strikes a blow for public accountability, though many GPs predictably, will hate being under the spotlight.

Lord Mackay's reforms of the laws governing divorce and domestic violence are humane and deserve to survive attacks from the Tory right. And ministers have rightly recognised, in their planned broadcasting legislation, that cross-media ownership needs to be relaxed to allow British companies to diversify and face foreign competition. But in setting limits on market share, this legislation should also ensure that would-be monopolists, in particular the Murdoch empire, do not swamp local competition.

In these practical measures, there is no sign of a big innovative idea that the Conservatives will need if they are to recover from their deep unpopularity in time for the general election. There was little or nothing that addresses Britain's most pressing concern: job insecurity, unemployment and the absence of an economic feel-good factor. The solutions have been left to the one forthcoming Bill that was not mentioned yesterday – the Finance Bill – which the Chancellor will unveil in his Budget on 28 November. On that, not yesterday's announcements, this Government's electoral future now hangs.

Can Di save the monarchy?

If the Queen thinks it's tough playing puppet for the Government, life is about to get even less amusing. For Diana's débüt on *Panorama* next Monday has the nation gripped with anticipation. Will she situate us with lurid details of rows in the royal bedchamber?

Whatever she says, it bodes ill for the Queen's conception of the monarchy. But that is probably no bad thing. The Princess could be the catalyst for some necessary positive changes.

Let's face it, the present monarchy sits uneasily with our modern society. A country that aspires to be meritocratic and classless retains as its figurehead a family that stands at the apex of the class system. The Queen is the symbolic representation of our nation. Yet many no longer wish to be symbolised by a detached, privileged and superior hereditary élite.

The monarchy could have adapted quickly to cope with all these problems. The Scandinavian and Benelux monarchies did exactly that. Humbler, calmer, closer to the lives of the people of their country, they ride bicycles through the streets and have paid tax for years.

Instead, the Royal Family tried to preserve its position of pomp and detached privilege by repackaging itself as a fairytale. But just as the Windsors' aristocratic lifestyle runs counter to every trend in modern society, so their fairy-tale image is incompatible with the reality of modern relationships. By resisting gradual

change they have been left behind by the world, and a crisis of the monarchy has been the inevitable consequence. And their resort to television has ensured that it is played out in the full glare of publicity.

The Princess has been cast in the most interesting role in this historical drama. She is the catalyst either for renewal or destruction, depending on how the rest of the royal respond. For she has built a huge public following by breaking the traditional royal mode. By cuddling their children, riding the rapids at a children's theme park, jogging, driving her own car and listening to pop music, she has carved out a distinctive image for herself. Is she an inspiring, exciting or regal figure, nor is she a role model for today's youth. But she is modern and sympathetic.

What we are witnessing is a public relations battle between the Royal Family of the past and the mother of the future monarch. Ironic as it might seem, the Princess's challenge might just push and cajole the Royal Family into modernising itself rather more than it has so far been prepared to accept. If she goes too far in pursuit of revenge against her husband, she could drag the whole institution down into an orgy of muck-raking recriminations. If she gets it right, then the Prince of Wales could be forced to respond.

The royals have resisted change for too long. Undignified as these royal rows certainly are, they could conceivably help to create a monarchy fit for the 21st century.

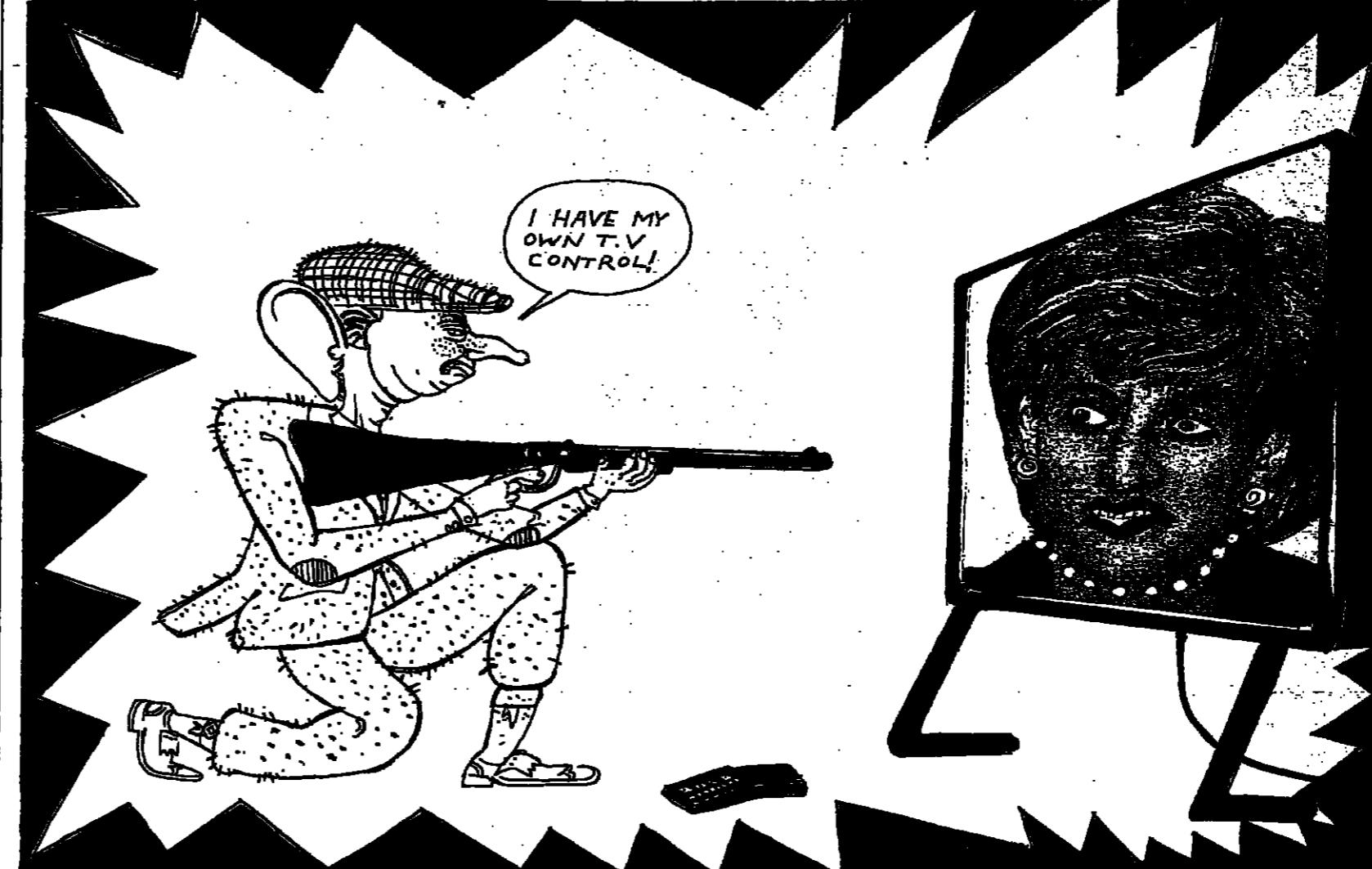
ANOTHER VIEW Vanessa Feltz

Let's hear it from Herself

A fox on the pusillanimous pundits who would ban the Princess of Wales from the box. What would they have her do – compose a retaliatory haiku? Let's face it, a more telesual creature never bestrode a multi-gym. The woman is a navy-blue-blooded Anthea Turner. Lunges a Pentax at her bottle-blonde highlights and she sizzles. Public criss-crossing of the scarcely-Versed royal thighs has become a performance art.

This princess was positively born to broadcast. What is more, she has tried turning the other silkens cheek and stiffening her (sublimely glossed) upper lip, and where has it dumped her? Up to her swan neck in the seething effluent of malevolent speculation, rising hackles and solid surmise. Life as a fallen idol is not all lightly tossed radicchio at Le Caprice, you know. When every Tom, Dick, James and ex-rock-moll-PR chick is entitled to spill beans, vent spleens and dish dirt, somehow dignified silence looks bite. No one loves an enigma. Post-Andrew Morton passivity starts to look frighteningly like an admission of guilt. Eventually, a girl's gotta do what every slighted woman from Mandy Smith to Germaine Greer has done before her – sit on a sofa in a truly fetching little suit and unburden her soul in the nation's living rooms.

Anyone who thinks Diana will stick her Maud Frizon foot in it cannot have been paying much attention to the venomous character-smashing that the poor dear has already endured. When Corn-



The ratings war

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Problems of legal Ecstasy

From Mr Charles de Lacy
Sir: You propose (leading article: "The agony of Ecstasy", 14 November) that Ecstasy should be brought within the law but you give no consideration to the complex problems this would create.

For example, all legitimate drugs have to have a proven track record in terms of their safety before they are licensed. To bring Ecstasy within the law, would you imagine it being submitted to all the rigorous tests of any other pharmaceutical drug?

Or is your proposal that any illegally used substances that are widely used will be deemed to be safe and legitimate for recreational purposes but not medical purposes?

If the latter route were taken, it would have a detrimental knock-on effect on the overall safety of medicines. It would lead to a culture and an outlook that no longer had the rigorous standards we expect from our pharmaceutical industry.

If we are to follow your proposal of legalisation on abused drugs, this must be within the current parameters of testing and licensing. This would mean some recreational drugs never being licensed, because they are dangerous. Others could be licensed but only available on prescription.

I suggest that this scenario is impractical, and we should accept that there will always be an illegal drugs industry, albeit decriminalised, and with the consequential result that from time to time people will die.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES DE LACY
Chelmsford,
Essex
15 November

From Dr Richard Pullinger
Sir: Your suggestion that "Ecstasy must be brought within the law" (14 November) is based on an incorrect assumption. By focussing on the possible adverse effects of contaminants you have missed the crucial point that adulterated Ecstasy is not safe. Readers of the national and medical press will be aware of the many cases where death has been attributed to Ecstasy itself.

Bringing Ecstasy within the law would be misguided and indefensible.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD PULLINGER
Reading
14 November

New mums – what you need is broth

From Mrs Christine Smith
Sir: Perhaps pregnant women living on benefit need educating ("Mothers' poor eating puts babies at risk", 14 November).

How about making soup: a marrow bone (a few pence from the butcher), root vegetables, perhaps a tin of tomatoes and some lentils, and bread for the children to dunk. Very nutritious, warming and inexpensive.

A teaspoon of yeast extract stirred in would add nutrition and flavour.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE SMITH
London, E1
14 November

Nigerian lessons for Shell and for the world

From Mr Menzies Campbell, MP
Sir: The law is quite clear. The directors of a limited company must manage its affairs in the best interests of its shareholders. They must put ethical considerations aside.

The directors of Shell would do well to keep those principles firmly in mind when they contemplate further investment in Nigeria. How can it possibly be in the interests of their shareholders to invest further in a country where civil war could break out at any time, whose leaders are unanswerable to reason, and which could easily become the subject of economic sanctions?

A prudent director of a public company would want to put his shareholders' money where there was much less risk than in Nigeria. The directors of Shell need not wrestle with their consciences. All they need to do is fulfil their legal duty.

Yours etc,
MENZIES CAMPBELL
MP for Fife North East
(Lib Dem)

House of Commons
London, SW1

The writer is the Liberal Democrat spokesman on foreign affairs and defence.

From Mr David Bull
Sir: Your article "Shell defies calls to pull out of oil operations" (Another View, 13 November) against a boycott of the brutal Nigerian regime for reasons of self-interest dressed

several organisations "united in the belief that there should be international oil sanctions" against Nigeria. In fact Amnesty International never calls for sanctions but instead uses a wide range of campaigning techniques including the application of intense worldwide pressure on governments floating international human rights standards.

The Nigerian government's blatant defiance of international appeals to spare the lives of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight other human rights activists was a senseless, outrageous act. It is now vital that political and diplomatic pressure on the Nigerian authorities to urgently tackle their human rights crisis be maintained and increased. We could not save Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-defendants, but we must not give up on those others who still depend on international pressure on Nigeria to save their lives.

Sincerely,
DAVID BULL
Director
Amnesty International UK
London, EC1
14 November

From Mr Bill Morris
Sir: Dick van den Broek, Shell's regional co-ordinator for Africa, argues ("Another View", 13 November) against a boycott of the brutal Nigerian regime for reasons of self-interest dressed

Fine-tuning the lottery

From Mr Denis Vaughan
Sir: There can be no doubt the National Lottery has delivered to Britain a capacity for greater funding of sport, charities and the arts than previously possible. But the success of the National Lottery is not limited to its achievements to date; a greater potential for funding of the arts, sports and charities is yet to be realised.

When I argued for a lottery, back in 1989, few believed it could happen, and fewer could see the limitless possibilities of using the lottery as a vehicle to increase participation and enthusiasm in sport and the arts.

Today, the success of the lottery speaks for itself, but we cannot be complacent with the achievement to date. The future of the National Lottery depends on ensuring we work to maximise the funds available to the good causes and that the original purpose of the lottery – to increase the quality of life for us all – is not forgotten.

We must focus our attention on fine-tuning the success of the National Lottery. Our aims are simple: the abolition of the 12 per cent tax on the lottery, re-drafting the lottery licence in the form of a service contract and adjusting the distribution process to ensure that 80 per cent of all good-cause funds go to the National Lottery Charities Board, leaving the minimum five per cent required by law to each of the other four beneficiaries.

Despite its success we should not be content with the present state of the National Lottery. There are still many jackpots to be realised.

Yours sincerely,
DENIS VAUGHAN
Executive Director
The Lottery Promotion Company
London, WC2

Straight men and macho culture

From Mr Peter Tatchell
Sir: The Commission on Children and Violence is right to point out the links between "macho male attitudes" and aggressive, antisocial behaviour (report, 9 November). However, to understand fully violent criminality, we need also to recognise that it is a form of behaviour associated overwhelmingly with young male heterosexuals (and very rarely with gay men). In straight male culture, aggression is deemed cool for "real men". Many act tough because they fear being accused of sissiness and queenliness. Belligerence is seen as a way of asserting their masculinity and their heterosexuality.

So long as male sensitivity and tenderness is looked down upon as unmanly and queer, large numbers of straight men (especially those who are insecure about their sexual orientation) will continue to project a belligerent machismo to "prove" their manhood and avoid the "taint" of homosexuality. Reducing male violence is thus partly bound up with eradicating homophobia. When heterosexual men no longer despise gentleness or fear queers, fewer will feel the need to act tough to distance themselves from the homosexual "other".

Reducing male violence is thus partly bound up with eradicating homophobia. When heterosexual men no longer despise gentleness or fear queers, fewer will feel the need to act tough to distance themselves from the homosexual "other".

Yours sincerely,
PETER TATCHELL
London, SE1

Honours of ownership

From Mr Michael Cole

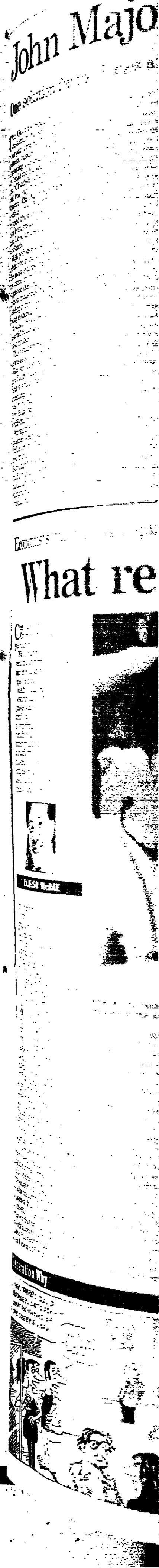
Sir: In your profiles of men who might aspire to be peers barons ("To be king of the fourth estate", 14 November), you mentioned the chairman of this company and said that Mohamed al-Fayed has probably resigned himself to doing without a knighthood, which you said was part of the appeal of media ownership.

Mr al-Fayed considers that his ownership of two national institutions, L'Hotel Ritz, Paris and Harrods of Knightsbridge is honour enough for any man, but you appear to have overlooked the fact that as an Egyptian he is not

eligible to be "Sir Mohamed". As this Government has denied him British citizenship, against all the tenets of natural justice, and has gone out of its way to prevent him acquiring a newspaper or a radio station, it is hardly likely that the Prime Minister will be recommending him for an honorary knighthood – notwithstanding the fact that Mr al-Fayed almost certainly contributes more in personal income tax to the national exchequer than the entire membership of the House of Commons, including the Speaker.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL COLE
Harrods
Director of Public Affairs
London, SW1
14 November

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Joy in 1995

comment

John Major, Leader of the Opposition

One solution for the Tories after yesterday's timid tinkering is to stop pretending they are in power

The Queen's Speech brought its customary bulletin on the health of our parliamentary culture. "What a pathetic bunch... a tawdry, low-life, mind-numbing exercise in political vacuity," said the Leader of the Opposition. "Childish, juvenile nonsense... total banality," replied the Prime Minister. On the other hand, to be positive, no Members actually dropped their trousers and wagged their bottoms at the other side – but then, I couldn't see the whole chamber clearly.

High politics it wasn't, neither in the debate nor in the ideas being debated. The most interesting thought of the day came from Tony Blair when he suggested that the asylum and immigration measures be put before a standing committee of the Commons, taking evidence about the bogus asylum-seeker problem so that consensus could be achieved and race be kept out of politics.

That would scupper any attempt to use this issue to divide the parties – as a Tory strategist had chillingly suggested a few weeks ago. On the other hand, it would prevent Labour from continuing to question the Conservatives' bona fides, as Jack Straw and Tony Blair have been doing. This would shut both sides up.

Among those nodding his vigorous agreement when Blair suggested it was Jim Lester, the One Nation Tory and close friend of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Major had an urgent muted conversation with Tony Newton, the Leader of the Commons, who was sitting beside him. He said he would consider the idea, but wasn't immedi-

ately attracted to it. He didn't say why; the main reason was surely the direction it came from, and the fact it was thrown out without warning as a debating point. But it would be a good gauntlet for him to stoop and pick up, Blair would win credit; but so would Major. It would be good for the reputation of politics.

Which, of course, would mark it out from most of what is fated to happen over the next year or so, as this marathon mud-fight of an election campaign slithers on. It is not going to be an heroic period. The Queen's Speech was a mixture of blatantly second-order party political issues chosen not for their importance to Britain but for the way they will sharpen differences between the parties, and mildly interesting administrative measures.

We should not be censorious about the party-dividing issues, the asylum Bill and the measures on grant-maintained schools and the Bill on media ownership. You can't be in favour of democracy and against party politics. Not yet, anyway. But these measures may seem a little too blatantly party-inspired to do the Tories much good in the long run.

Douglas Hurd elegantly suggested in the context of divorce reform, "in this climate, political success goes to those who sound least like politicians". The wisest saying of the day, that should be carved in tropical hardwood and hung across the door of the Commons chamber.

The media Bill should be seen partly as a party matter simply because anything that touches the ownership



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

of newspapers and broadcasting companies is now so intensely sensitive. It is the place where private power and political power are currently clashing. The new measure would have two politically interesting effects. It raises just enough of a question-mark over the longer-term future of Rupert Murdoch's newspaper holdings to make him pause when Tory ministers suggest that he shows a bit of loyalty in the run-up to the election. It would also open the way for Associated Newspapers, owner of the *Daily Mail*, to pounce on Yorkshire Television or Tyne-Tees, or both. Immediately after mentioning the measure yesterday Mr Major stated that "we, as a party, have a long tradition of helping those in need". He may have meant the measures on homelessness he went on to discuss; but for a split second, one had the surreal impression that he was talking about Lord Rothermere.

Well, as I say, we mustn't be censorious. Everything bar race is fair game in politics. And there is also the usual raft of measures that come under the broad heading of administrative reform – changes to the way

disabled people get funding, training measures, housing, an extension of the powers of the under-employed security service to become involved in the drug war, changes to court procedures and so on.

These raise bitter passions among special interest groups and the closed order of political obsessives, but none is likely to raise a weary eyebrow in Kenneth Clarke's fabled saloon bar, the Dog and Duck. *For that we must await his Budget*, when the income-tax cuts long predicted by this newspaper may set the national debate alive in a way the Queen's Speech hasn't.

In the good times, sensible administrative reforms and the odd bold stroke which suggests a longer-term programme of change are enough to get governments re-elected. But these are not good times, or at least, not good enough times.

Had the economy been growing really strongly and the housing market moving, then the significance of, for instance, the education reforms would have seemed more substantial. Part of the trick of democratic politics is to give a sense of forward movement. When a government seems young and virile that can be done with relative modest legislation, like the early Thatcher trade union reforms, because we assume that the measures will accumulate; we judge the political intention as well as the immediate legal wording.

The core of this government's dilemma, as exposed yesterday, is that it seems old. It cannot convey forward energy or a sense of its own future. So these measures, administrative or

political, fail to fit into a wider pattern of reform. They don't lead anywhere. What is supposed to follow nursery vouchers, or the asylum measures, or the Broadcasting Bill?

There is no grand project for the Conservatives, nothing to make our nape-hairs prickle; or at least nothing that is plausibly deliverable by this party now. They can talk about a low-tax, shrunken state but they have little idea of how they would get there. There are other right-wing projects on offer, such as withdrawal from the European Union or the dismantling of the free National Health Service, but they are not practical politics.

The Conservatives are in serious danger of having the worst of both worlds, being attacked by Labour for their right-wing rhetoric – Blair is labelling them "extremists" in just the same way as President Clinton is going for the Republican leaders in Congress – while failing to deliver popular measures. In private many senior ministers seem frustrated and boxed-in – and not surprisingly.

Their last way out is to convince the country that the only grand project that is on offer, the Labour-Liberal programme for political change in Scotland and at Westminster, is horribly dangerous – that life under a ministry of administrative tinkers may be dispiriting, but that it's better than rule by reformers. That would mean the Conservatives ceasing to think of themselves as a government and becoming, in effect, an opposition in office. On the strength of yesterday's programme, that may well be the plan.

Revealed: Diana the philosopher

On Monday, the Princess of Wales is due to appear on *Panorama* and talk about everything. Well, there is one thing she will not be talking about. She will not be talking about the *Panorama* interview. That is because she has already talked to us about that. Here is the interview I was gracious enough to accept from her recently.

Now, your Highness (if I may call you that), there is a sense in which the fact of this interview is more important than anything in the interview itself, is it not?

That was the whole idea. They do fear the worst. You saw all the headlines: "Palace fury"; "Prince goes bananas on birthday"; "Queen hits the ceiling". None of this is because of what I have said. They don't know what I have said. It is only because I have said it and I didn't forewarn them. Do you think Charles asked my permission to talk to Dimbleby?

I would guess not.

I should coco. So, do you know what the most important thing about the interview is?

Er – no.

The most important thing



about the interview is that even if it never goes out on the BBC on Monday, I have already gained as much favourable publicity from it as I possibly can. More, perhaps. Indeed, you could say that even if the interview never existed, I have got as much publicity out of it as possible. There is no need for it to go out now.

But it does exist.

*How do you know? The one thing that has come out of all this is that no one at *Panorama* knew it existed. No one at the palace knew about it. No one on my staff knew about it. It is almost impossible to keep anything that secret – unless it doesn't exist.*

But it has to go out on Monday, so it must exist.

*Not necessarily. Maybe the screening will be cancelled. Maybe, in return for that, the palace will give in to all my demands. Maybe I will get all I want and then reluctantly ask *Panorama* not to show a film – which never existed.*

But, your Highness, you are not clever enough to think of an idea like that, are you?

You may very well think that. I couldn't possibly comment.

My God – you've been watching Francis Urquhart.

The very man on whom I now model all my actions.

(More of this fascinating interview tomorrow, unless something more interesting turns up.)

LE CRUNCH?



...NO THANKS.

PROTEST YOUR DISGUST AGAINST FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

BOYCOTT BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU DAY

Generation Why



obituaries/gazette

Jack Holt

Jack Holt was one of the greatest small-boat designers that Britain has ever had. In a career spanning over 60 years, a quarter of a million examples of Holt's 40-odd designs, including the Cadet, Merlin and Mirror dinghies were built. Holt is the only British designer to have had three boats recognised with a classification from the International Yacht Racing Union. Latterly, the company he built up, Jack Holt Ltd, has switched the emphasis in its business from making boats to manufacturing and selling one of the biggest selection of boat fittings in the world.

Holt was born in Hammersmith, west London, the son of a panelbeater, in 1912. He first learnt about fine wood as an apprentice cabinet-maker; and in his boatbuilding career he put his knowledge of the difference between good wood and very good wood to excellent use when it came to choosing spruce for a mast or timber for planking. But a badly broken leg, sustained in an accident while riding pillion on a motorcycle, which left him in plaster to the thigh for a long period, put an end to his cabinet-making career when he was still in his teens.

He had sailed with the Sea Scouts as a boy, helping them with their boats, and bought his first boat, a 14ft dinghy, with his brother from the writer A.P. Herbert, close neighbour on the Thames at Hammersmith. In 1929, when he was 17, he set up business in a hut under Hammersmith Bridge where his late great-uncle John Holt had repaired boats. When building his first boat, *Candlelight*, he did not have enough money to buy a brass tack, let alone the metal shanks which every other builder used on their masts to hoist the sail. Jack Holt solved the problem by making a groove in the wooden mast through which the thick side of the sail was pulled up. This "boltrope" groove was laughed at the time but is now used by all small boats.

On his first visit to Cowes in the 1930s – the time that we met – Holt competed in the championship for 14ft boats, one of which he had built. His entry was looked upon with sneers by the sailing establishment. Why should a boat-builder enter a National Championship where the elite were competing? And, to make it worse, his yard was

on the River Thames at Hammersmith. Though Holt did not win he made a good placing. He was busy in the Thirties building other boats, designed for eager sailors. His boat in the 18ft class was an outstanding success as was his 12ft National.

During the Second World War Holt built lifeboats and wooden copies of enemy planes for the Government, moving with his staff down the river, taking to a former oar-making works near Putney Bridge; it is still a Jack Holt shop, selling everything you could need for a boat including clothing.

After the war, a small group from Ranelagh Sailing Club, based on the same stretch of the Thames, commissioned Holt to design a small boat. It was called a Merlin and was accepted as a fine racing boat more simply made and more economic than other 14ft boats. The first Merlin is now on show at the Maritime Museum, in Greenwich.

The Merlin was a success and in 1947 *Yachting World* magazine asked Holt to design a children's boat. His design could be sailed by boys and girls aged 8 to 16. They were soon sailing them very proficiently and word of this small boat went all over the world. It was called the Cadet. In those early post-war years there was still a divide in the sailing world: with the yacht club for the gentry and the sailing club for the workers. But youngs, in Holt's cheap and simple Cadet, did not know this and when Cadets from yacht club and sailing club were out on the same bit of water the class privilege was ignored. It was the first breakthrough in solving the class problem on the water. The boat was adopted by many countries and large regattas are held for this class every year.

The Cadet was followed by a simple boat called Enterprise, commissioned for promotional purposes by the *News Chronicle* newspaper in 1953, with blue sails. This too became very popular and has world-wide fleets. The Asian Games, which are held every four years, between the Olympic Games, still use the Enterprise as their prime class. Both the Cadet and the Enterprise were accepted by the International Yacht Racing Union and were recognised as International Classes. Then came an even simpler boat that people could make from kits themselves. It was called the



Mirror dinghy, designed by Holt, of which 69,744 have been registered

Photograph: Keystone

Mirror, promoted by the *Mirror* newspaper titles, and it too was accepted as a World International Class. Manufactured as a kit by Bell Woodworking, it has been built greater numbers than any other of Holt's designs: 69,744 Mirrors have been

al Purpose 14 (GP14, 1950), a very wholesome boat, well adapted to sailing, going fishing with room for a picnic, and a good boat to row.

Holt also made time too to race, both in Britain and in countries abroad. He was a first-class racing helmsman and won many championships, including three Merlin championships in that boat's early days. His boats were the first RYA Class boats to sail abroad: in Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Poland. He was invited to Australia where about five of his classes were raced and he had the joy of his

life going from centre to centre in Australia, each of which held a special Jack Holt Regatta. All these Holt boats could be built by any other builder, professional or amateur. Doing all this Holt was a gentle man in every sense. I knew him for more than 60 years, and was his business partner for the past 50, and never heard a cross word or a refusal to help anyone.

Beecher Moore

John Lapworth Holt, boat designer; born London 18 April 1912; married Iris Thornton (one daughter and one son deceased); died Chichester 14 November 1995.

Dr Stephen MacKeith

Stephen MacKeith was a consultant psychiatrist with an almost matchless breadth of experience, obtained through taking a new appointment roughly every seven years in a full-year career that took him all over Britain.

MacKeith was an idealist especially interested in the social aspects of medicine and was for many years an active member of the Keppel Club, with a membership concerned with social issues. He unstintingly sought, by using forward planning and innovation, to improve the spheres of medicine with which he came into contact, both in psychiatry and in health education. He was interested in helping the less popular subspecialties such as child psychiatry and learning disability, and also encouraged a scheme for the reintroduction to medicine of women who had left practice to bring up a family.

MacKeith was born in 1906 into a medical family with a general practitioner father and three brothers, all of whom became consultants; Stephen took a scholarship at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, in London.

MacKeith's clinical career was in the best tradition of the pre- and post-war mental hospital. A flair for administration led to two successive posts as Deputy Medical Superintendent, at Hatton Hospital, Warwick, and Graylingwell Hospital, Chichester, the latter being interrupted by the Second World War, in which he served with the Royal Army Medical Corps as a War Office adviser and as a command psychiatrist. He saw action in North Africa and Italy and was Psychiatric Adviser to Allied Force HQ under General Eisenhower. For his war service he was appointed OBE. After the war, he returned to the outside South Australia, where he was for five months a visiting teaching Fellow at the Perth Institute

RAMC but was then appointed as Physician Superintendent at Napsbury Hospital, in St Albans, which then had care of over 2,000 patients.

MacKeith next moved to a purely clinical consultant post in Norwich, where he developed a highly successful private practice and during which he was also seconded to the World Health Organisation for two periods, advising on psychiatric services and hospitals in the Far East. This was followed by a further seven years as Medical Superintendent at Warlingham Park Hospital, in Surrey, further enhancing its well-deserved reputation as a standard-bearer of psychiatric innovation.

Perhaps MacKeith's most far-reaching contribution came in 1964, when he moved to Hampshire, this time combining a clinical post at Knowle, outside Southampton, with that of Regional Tutor in psychiatry. As a colleague he was a rewarding companion, with a fund of stories and a gift for listening

He established and developed the Wessex Regional School of Psychiatry and painstakingly organised one of the first comprehensive day-release courses in postgraduate psychiatry, initially for the Diploma of Psychological Medicine and later for the Membership of the newly formed Royal College of Psychiatrists, of which he was a Founder Fellow.

On MacKeith's retirement in 1973, the Regional School and its courses were in a strong position, when taken over by the academic department of psychiatry in the newly formed Medical School at Southampton, where MacKeith's legacy is maintained to this day.

MacKeith started on his retirement from psychiatry a new career in health education in Southampton. This took him to Western Australia, where he was for five months a visiting teaching Fellow at the Perth Institute

of Technology. In 1980-81, he spent 10 months in the United States, lecturing at the Stanford University Medical Centre and the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Alabama. Further trips to universities in Australia followed in 1984. Two years earlier, he had given up his work in health education, thereafter working as an Honorary Visiting Fellow to the Department of Psychology at Southampton University.

MacKeith was always interested in the imaginary world of children. In co-operation with Robert Silvey he studied and wrote on the private worlds of children, for which MacKeith coined the word "paracosm". He co-wrote, with David Cohen, *The Development of the Imagination: the private worlds of childhood* (1990).

As a colleague he was a rewarding companion, with a fund of stories and a gift for listening

which made him always available for advice. As such he was the ideal trainer in an apprenticeship system, teaching by example the wrinkles of clinical psychiatry with as much acumen and enthusiasm as he would the administrative inspection of a long-stay mental hospital ward. He was intensely, but not intrusively, interested in the progress of his junior colleagues and friends. Even after his final retirement, he remained active, studying the history of military psychiatry, and writing poetry. His marriage to Frances, daughter of the eminent psychotherapist Millais Culpin, was exceptionally fortunate and they celebrated their golden wedding in 1988. For many years Stephen MacKeith had attended the meetings of the Society of Friends in Winchester but only became one of their members about three years ago.

John Grimshaw

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

FRANKLIN: Aaron, on 8 November 1995, a son for Alan and Gayle, at Burton-on-Trent.

OLLINTON: On 14 November, to Sophie and Crispin, a son, Alexander.

Announcements for GAZETTE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 119 High Holborn, London WC1V 7EP, telephone 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 0070, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHERS (Deaths, funerals, memorials, notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, Marriages Guard) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, Outward Bound Trust, visits Oakdale Bakery, Leeds, and visits St James's Hospital, London. Prince Alexander, Patron, Bournemouth Crystal Palace, attended a Gala Concert to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Bournemouth Sinfonia, at St James's Palace.
Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am, in Battalion Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Band provided by the Welsh Guards.

Birthdays

Professor Chinua Achebe, novelist, poet and educationalist, 65; Mr Peter Ainsworth MP, 39; Mr Michael Billington, author and broadcaster, 56; Miss Lisa Bonet, actress, 28; Mr Frank Bruno, boxer, 34; Mr Will Carson, jockey, 69; Sir John Hanmer, director-general, British Council, 57; Sir Colin Marshall, Chairman and chief executive, British Telecom, 62; Miss Joanna Pether, actress, 31; Mr Griff Rhys Jones, actor and writer, 42; Sir Callum MP, 64; Mr John Stenhouse, former insurance broker, 87; Canon Herbert Stuart, Canon Emeritus, Lincoln Cathedral, 89; Sir Edward Tompkins, former ambassador, 89; Sir Magdi Yacoub, cardiothoracic surgeon, 60; Professor Michael Zander, Professor of Law, LSE, 63.

Anniversaries

Birth: Tibetan Buddhist emperor, 42 BC; William John Thomas, founder of Nestle on 8 October, 1865; John Bright, political reformer, 1811; Alphonse-Marie-Louis Daudet, violin player and composer, 1859; Sir Oswald Mosley, Fascist leader, 1880; Deafness Perkin Warbeck, pretender to the English throne, executed 1499; James Ferguson, astronomer, 1776; John Walker, founder of the *Times*, 1802; Charles Dickens, 1867; William Holden (William Franklin Beedle), actor, 1981; Arthur Bowden Askey, comedian, 1933. On this day: Westminster Bridge was formally opened, 1750; Washington was captured by British troops, 1776; Paul I became Tsar of Russia, 1796; the Holborn Empire, London, opened as Weston's Music Hall, 1857; the Suez Canal was formally opened at Port Said, 1869;

Wyndham's Theatre, London, opened, 1899; the first cartoon film, *The Enchanted Drawing*, by the artist James Stuart Blackton, appeared, 1900; following a period of rampant inflation, a new currency system was introduced in Germany, 1923. Today is the Feast Day of St Afan, St Agnes of Assisi, St Edmund of Abingdon, St Eucherius of Lyons, St Gertrude of Helfta, St Margaret of Scotland, St Mechtilde of Helfta and St Nixon "Metanoeite".

Lectures

National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "The Loves of the Gods (iii): Fragments showing her Sisters her Gifts from Cupid", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Diana Jerry-Aldrich, "The Renaissance in Art", 1.30pm. Tate Gallery: Ian Dickson Gill, "Constable, Turner and the Sky", 1pm. British Museum: Paul Collins, "Monarchs of Mesopotamia: Summerian", 1.15pm. National Portrait Gallery (Royal Astronomical Society Lecture Series): Dr Allan Chapman, "Georgeairy (1801-92)", 1.10pm. King's College London, London WC2: Professor Joyce Hill, "Confusions and Contradictions: the Roman emperors", 1.10pm. Mrs Diane Yeo, to be Chief Executive of the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children. Mr David Turner, to be Chairman of the Family Division.

Mr David Michael Meredith, to be a Provincial Subiary Magistrate for the Leicester Commission Area, based at Leicester Magistrates' Court. Mr John Chalstrey, has been admitted as Lord Mayor of London. Mrs Justice Hogg, to be a Benchers. Mr Adrian White and Mr Richard Evans, have been appointed Governors of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Mrs Diane Yeo, to be Chief Executive of the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children. Mr Laurence Keen, re-elected President, British Archaeological Association. Mr David Turner, to be Chairman of Send a Cow.

Foundation for Science and Technology

Lord Butterworth was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held yesterday evening by the Foundation for Science and Technology at the Royal Society, London W1. Mr Robert Margetts, Professor Arthur Francis and Mr Alastair Macdonald spoke on "An Industrial Revival - the Engineering Community's Action for Engineering".

The practice whereby proceedings against a council were brought by a council tenant alone but settlement was reached or judgment was given on behalf of the tenant's family should cease as it might disadvantage those under disability in the family.

The Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by N, suing by her stepfather and next friend, from Judge Graham QC's decision to strike out N's claim against the council.

N, a Down's syndrome girl aged 19, claimed damages for personal injury caused by the council's negligence and breach of statutory duty. She alleged that having lived in a council house let to her mother in a state of disrepair and dampness, she suffered recurrent bouts of chest and upper respiratory infection. N obtained judgment in default of defence.

The council then applied to set aside the judgment and strike out N's claim on the basis that in an earlier action brought by her mother which had been settled by the council undertaking to repair the house and paying £15,000 dam-

ages, the damages included compensation for N's loss and alternatively, applying the principle of *res judicata*, N's claim should not be allowed to go forward.

The judge rejected the first argument but struck out the claim on the grounds that N's claim should have been advanced at the same time as her mother's and since N was entirely dependent on her mother for her upbringing, litigation, mother and daughter could be regarded as the same party to the actions which raised virtually identical issues.

Mr Justice Hogg QC, for the council, said that the plea of *res judicata* encompassed two distinct forms of estoppel: cause of action estoppel and issue estoppel.

Issue estoppel arose where the cause of action in the latter proceedings was identical to that in the earlier proceedings between the same parties and involving the same subject matter.

Issue estoppel represented an extension of the doctrine of *res judicata* to include a bar on the subsequent litigation not only of all decided issues in the earlier proceedings but also every point which might have been brought forward.

The plea of *res judicata* applied only where the cause of action or issue was and remained between the same parties or their predecessors in title. It was impossible to argue that N's dependence on her mother created a sufficient nexus between them that they should be regarded effectively as the same party.

Furthermore Order 10, rules 10 and 11 of the County Court Rules provided that where money was claimed by a person under disability, no settlement, compromise or payment should be valid without the approval of the court.

The principle that an unlitigated monetary claim was barred if it could have been advanced and established in earlier proceedings could not be extended to those not party to the earlier proceedings between the same parties and involving the same subject matter.

However lawyers and their clients should not be encouraged to follow the course adopted here. It was plainly in

Later claim against council not barred

LAW REPORT

16 November 1995

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The principle that an unlitigated monetary claim was barred if it could have been advanced and established in earlier proceedings could not be extended to those not party to the earlier proceedings between the same parties and involving the same subject matter.

However lawyers and their clients should not be encouraged to follow the course adopted here. It was plainly in

the public interest to have a single action in which the claims of all affected members of the household were included rather than a multiplicity of actions. To some extent, the remedy lay with the council: when faced with a tenant's claim, it could inquire whether other claims too were to be advanced.

The argument that the settlement of the mother's action included compensation for N's loss faced the difficulty that the mother was not dealt with under Order 10, rules 10 and 11.

Serious problems were created by the practice of proceedings being brought by the tenant alone and yet settlement being reached on behalf of the whole family. That practice wholly ignored the effect of Order 10, rules 10 and 11 and might disadvantage both the defendant and those under disability. The defendant lost the protection of the settlement or judgment against future claims. The practice subverted the function of Order 10 which was designed to safeguard the interests of those under disability. The practice should cease.

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BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2530 fax 0171-293 2098

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Investment: Heat on for British Gas
Market Report: Deals in the air at C & W
Economics: False blood and spending cuts

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

COMMENT

MARKET SUMMARY								
STOCK MARKETS								
FTSE 100	Dow Jones	Nikkei						
3670	4000	16000						
3570	3900	15000						
3530	3750	14000						
3490	3650	13000						
3450	3700	12000						
3410	3750	11000						
T F M T W	T F M T W	T F M T W						
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12 Wk High	12 Wk Low	Yield(%)		
FTSE 100	35714	+235	+0.7	35930	34934	4.0		
FTSE 250	35222	+168	+0.4	35003	35003	3.5		
FTSE 350	17751	+103	+0.6	17853	17707	3.9		
FT Small Cap	19369	+104	+0.0	19331	19785	3.4		
FT All-Shares	7515	+19	+0.6	7728	14852	3.8		
New York	48801	+83	-0.1	48900	37748	2.4		
Tokyo	176827	-188	-0.7	176530	144854	0.8%		
Hong Kong	94314	+240	+0.3	100329	69879	4.5%		
Frankfurt	21822	-11	-0.5	23170	18110	2.0%		
Paris	8172	+370	+2.0	20723	17211	3.2%		
Milan	90550	+490	+0.5	90710	89120	1.8%		
All Share Index & graph at 1338 hours								

*New Jersey Index & graph at 1338 hours **FTSE World Index Tickers

MAIN PRICE CHANGES								
FTSE 250 companies (excluding investment trusts)								
Rises								
Price (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change	Price (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change	Price (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change
Wimpey (George)	17	134	Westland	264	12	45		
Tarmac	92.5	9	102	189	7	38		
Lloyd's Chartered	248	16	68	253	3	4.5		
Storehouse	311	15	51	Senior Engineering	94	3	31	
Hambros	202	9	47	Vendome Lux	546	15	27	
Falls								
UK medium gilt	8.40	-0.10	US long bond	7.70	-0.05	0.6%		
8.60	-0.10	0.6%	7.90	-0.05	0.6%			
8.75	-0.10	0.6%	8.00	-0.05	0.6%			
8.85	-0.10	0.6%	8.20	-0.05	0.6%			
8.90	-0.10	0.6%	8.40	-0.05	0.6%			
8.95	-0.10	0.6%	8.60	-0.05	0.6%			
9.00	-0.10	0.6%	8.70	-0.05	0.6%			
9.05	-0.10	0.6%	8.80	-0.05	0.6%			
9.10	-0.10	0.6%	8.90	-0.05	0.6%			
9.15	-0.10	0.6%	9.00	-0.05	0.6%			
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11.25	-0.10	0.6%	11.20	-0.05	0.6%			
11.30	-0.10	0.6%	11.25	-0.05	0.6%			
11.35	-0.10	0.6%	11.30	-0.05	0.6%			
11.40	-0.10	0.6%	11.35	-0.05	0.6%			
11.45	-0.10	0.6%	11.40	-0.05	0.6%			
11.50	-0.10	0.6%	11.45	-0.05	0.6%			
11.55	-0.10	0.6%	11.50	-0.05	0.6%			
11.60	-0.10	0.6%	11.55	-0.05	0.6%			
11.65	-0.10	0.6%	11.60	-0.05	0.6%			
11.70	-0.10	0.6%	11.65	-0.05	0.6%			
11.75	-0.10	0.6%	11.70	-0.05	0.6%			
11.80	-0.10	0.6%	11.75	-0.05	0.6%			
11.85	-0.10	0.6%	11.80	-0.05	0.6%			
11.90	-0.10	0.6%	11.85	-0.05	0.6%			
11.95	-0.10	0.6						



COMMENT

'With the interests of different groups of [Lloyd's] names so at variance with each other, settlement requires a brilliant financier, a master tactician ... and a diplomat of the first order'

Lloyd's resignation adds to risks in row with names

Peter Middleton's resignation as chief executive of the Lloyd's of London insurance market could hardly have come at a worse time for the embattled organisation. Lloyd's is now at a highly sensitive point in negotiations about a settlement with its loss-making names. Their successes in the courts over the last year have transformed the balance of power. Lloyd's must reach a deal or face terminal decline.

There has been and remains a very real risk, in the absence of a settlement, that at some point the Department of Trade and Industry will find it impossible to continue to issue Lloyd's with a solvency certificate. That is the nuclear outcome but it is one that looks all too possible for this deeply troubled organisation. There will be some in this intensely combative market who will greet Mr Middleton's departure with relief. Rosalind Gilmore, the head of regulation who left recently after a year in the job, kept silent about the reasons for her departure but it would surprise nobody if one of her reasons was the difficulty of coping with the old guard that still exists at Lloyd's despite all it has been through.

Mr Middleton, despite his protestations yesterday that he enjoyed working with David Rowland, the chairman, has had a tense enough relationship with him. When in public together, this was painfully visible. The very difficulty of the situation could be a good enough reason for bringing in a new chief executive, since a fresh pair of eyes may

see new solutions. None the less, many will see Mr Middleton's departure as a deepening of the crisis.

With the interests of different groups of names so at variance with each other, settlement requires a brilliant financier, a master tactician and a diplomat of the first order. Ron Sandler, Mr Middleton's replacement, was responsible for setting up Equitas, the financial vehicle at the heart of the rescue plan, and there is little doubt that he has the technical qualifications for the job.

On the other hand, it was Mr Middleton who appeared to be pushing earlier than his chairman for the much-needed renewal of attempts to resurrect the settlement with names that failed in late 1993. And it is he who knows the details of the tortuous negotiations and the sensitivities of all the individuals with whom he has dealt.

A genuine win-win deal

When two companies describe a deal as a "win-win situation" you can normally be sure that at least one of the parties is either being disingenuous or has missed something. Yesterday's unexpected asset swap between Wimpey and Tarmac however, appears to come close to realising the corporate philosopher's stone. If it sets the ball rolling the much-needed consolidation of the UK's beleaguered construction

industry, it will be seen as a watershed. Having hoisted the For Sale sign over its housing operation in August, Tarmac came for a witter of not unreasonable criticism. As a forced seller, it would be pushed to achieve net assets of just over £300m, let alone the £400m it was privately hoping for. The cash would then burn hole in its pocket, be spent in a hurry and unwisely; even worse from the City's point of view, it would dilute earnings.

Exchanging the division for Wimpey's quarrying and contracting arms addresses all those issues and leaves its partner smiling as well. At a stroke, Wimpey becomes the dominant force in UK housing with a market share twice its nearest rivals, Beazer and Barratt. Both companies have also neatly avoided the twin likelihoods of having to sell assets at a discount and paying a premium when they come to spend the proceeds.

Which will be the long-term winner is a harder call. Wimpey faces a stagnant domestic market and a massive extra cash drain on its resources – it will cost £200m a year just to replace the land it builds on. Tarmac, by contrast, has increased its exposure to a road programme. The Government is showing increasing signs of abandoning, together with the supply of rocks and blacktop, that depends on it. On the other hand, with £1.75bn of turnover to play with, the potential for profit growth is large. Squeezing even a little more margin out of that scale of revenue will bring rich bottom-line rewards.

It has been a dismal year for the building industry as the hoped-for recovery disappeared over the horizon. Compared with a soaring stock market, the sector has been a damp squib, underperforming the All Share by 15 per cent. For the 1990s so far as a whole, building shares have underperformed the market by a half. Now that Wimpey and Tarmac have actually done something to correct the obvious overcapacity problem in these industries, rather than just talk about it, perhaps others will follow suit.

Rail link shows hopeful signs

The charade that is the Government's attempt to persuade the private sector to build and operate a high-speed rail link between London and the Channel Tunnel seems to have taken a turn for the better. The Department of Transport has brought in a BP seconded to adjudicate over the final stages of selection for the £3bn project. Ministers took the view that only someone with private sector negotiating skills would be up to the task of extracting the best possible deal from the two remaining bidders, Eurotunnel (a consortium of BICC, Trafalgar House, Sealboard, HSBC and NatWest) and London & Continental (Virgin, Ove Arup and Bechtel among others).

The Government is due to announce its preferred bidder before Christmas. For

work to begin, however, first requires legislation, while the contractors determined to avoid the cost overruns and other pitfalls that bedevilled Eurotunnel, want at least a year of detailed design and engineering planning before even putting a spade to the earth.

The private sector adjudicator is John Hawshaw, provided gratis by BP for as long as it takes to complete the negotiation. This is being conducted in almost comic fashion with the Eurotunnel team taking the morning session and the rivals the afternoon. The hour's lunch break between is thought sufficient to prevent the two from meeting. The Government's purpose is to ensure that the level of subsidy (anything between £1bn and £2bn) is as small as possible. But there is a variable – the degree of risk that is assumed by the winning bidder. The higher the degree of risk assumed by the successful bidder, the higher the level of subsidy demanded.

None of this means the high-speed link is actually going to get built. Post-Eurotunnel, bankers are doubly cautious in backing infrastructure projects of this sort. So are the equity investors that both consortia intend to tap. Even so, prospects for this badly needed venture now look better than at any stage in the last five years. With the more diligent approach to costs being adopted by all involved, as well as the revenue stream of Eurostar, the project looks a more hopeful private sector bet than the tunnel it will one day service.

British Gas calls for help as profits slump

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

British Gas warned of a profits fall yesterday and called on the Government to help bail it out of heavy losses on its North Sea supply contracts. The company is seeking relief from the levy it pays on gas from North Sea fields, which at present costs £17m annually.

The warning was accompanied by a statement from Richard Giordano, the chair-

man, which was seen as a hint that the company might be broken up. He said: "The board ... is addressing the longer-term options open to us, to ensure we maximise value for shareholders."

The statement fuelled speculation that the company plans to sell off the gas trading operations, which are already set to be put into a separate subsidiary.

British Gas also cast doubt on the Government's plans to introduce domestic competition by April 1996, after delays in fi-

nalising legislation. The Government has put great store on plans for a pilot scheme in the South-west, which it is hoped will slash gas prices and help restore the damaged public reputation of privatised utilities.

The company said exceptionally warm weather could result in underlying profits dropping below last year's £927m. British Gas announced an historic loss of £181m in the third quarter, compared with a loss of £149m in the same period last year.

The loss is after provisions of £83m related to long-term contracts for gas the company must buy but for which there is yet no market. The company also said that under the contracts it would be forced to make a £520m pre-payment in the current quarter for gas not used.

Mr Giordano called on the Government to help the company renegotiate these "take or pay" contracts, the effect of which he said is impossible to quantify. He said that the situa-

tion would be exacerbated by the introduction of domestic competition next year, adding: "The Government has taken decisions to change the structure of the market. We expect them to do everything in their power to ensure that the contracts are renegotiated."

British Gas, whose share of the commercial and industrial gas market has already fallen to about 35 per cent, argues that the contracts with North Sea producers were entered into

when it had a monopoly and an obligation to supply. But the producers say that they have to have regard to the interests of their own shareholders, and not those of British Gas.

As part of its plea for government help, British Gas has raised the issue of reducing or abolishing the state levy on North Sea gas supplies imposed before privatisation.

Mr Giordano said: "The significant surplus of gas currently available in the UK market,

in the nine months to 30 September, and an estimated £50m in October alone. Mr Giordano said that in spite of the problems, the board intends to maintain the dividend for 1995. Shares fell by 4p to 241.5p.

British Gas also faces continued regulatory threat from the watchdog Ofgas, which is reviewing the price controls for domestic customers and the amount it will be able to charge rival suppliers to use its pipes.

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Profits from Grid may be capped

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry watchdog, warned that the National Grid Company could face a cap on profits in future, or a sharing of dividends between customers and shareholders.

The suggestion comes weeks before the planned £3.5bn flotation of the Grid, owned by the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales.

In a consultative document issued yesterday on the future control of the NGC, Professor Littlechild asked for views on whether the price control system used at present should be scrapped.

The Grid currently keeps transmission charges to inflation minus three percentage points, but the formula expires in early 1997.

Professor Littlechild said the new control could "relate to profits or to some form of sliding scale involving prices, profits and perhaps dividends".

He also asked for views on "the basis for NGC's shareholders to receive an appropriate return, and the means of assessing this".

One City analyst said: "This shows that regulatory risk remains a big negative. It would not be good news if profit-capping was to be implemented."

Even if the present system of price-capping continued, the future formula was likely to be tougher and could involve a one-off cut of up to 15 per cent.

A spokesman for the Grid said: "This is only the first communication in a discussion and we will respond in due course."

Market unimpressed with Jakarta's telecom sell-off



The Jakarta Stock Exchange last night held a special session to mark the debut in New York and London of shares in PT Telkom, the privatised Indonesian telecoms operator. The issue had a lukewarm response in international markets, and the government raised about \$600m from overseas investors, against a target of \$1.7bn. The price was set at \$18 per American Depository Share.

Tarmac swaps houses for roads

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

The long-awaited consolidation of the troubled UK building industry was kick-started yesterday by the unexpected announcement that Tarmac is to swap its house-building operation, Britain's second largest, for Wimpey's construction and minerals activities.

The City welcomed the deal with Tarmac's shares closing 10.5p higher at 93.5p, a 13 per cent rise. Wimpey was marked 15p higher at 127p, a similar increase. Both shares have underperformed sharply over the past year as trading conditions have deteriorated.

Following the deal, Wimpey will dominate the UK new-

house market, building an estimated 15,000 houses a year. Joe Dwyer, the company's chief executive, said Wimpey had targeted 20,000 houses a year after expansion of its operations in the US and Australia.

Tarmac becomes Britain's leading road-builder and aggregates producer, generating substantial asset backing for what is expected to be a leading role in the Government's private finance initiative. Industry observers believe the PFI will be dominated by large, financially strong companies.

Both companies described the asset swap, which puts a value of about £320m on Tarmac's housing operation, as a "win-win situation". Tarmac signalled in August that it

planned to withdraw from house building, but yesterday's deal confirmed that neither company could continue to fund expansion of a range of businesses and would need to focus on only one of their existing divisions.

By swapping assets in this way, the companies avoid accepting a discount to underlying value in the disposal of unwanted divisions, and the need to pay a premium when the funds raised are reinvested.

Neville Simms, Tarmac's chief executive, said the deal answered criticisms levelled in August that the sale of housing would fail to achieve asset value, that Tarmac would be unable to reinvest the funds effectively and that earnings per share

would be diluted. The deal was confirmation of his confidence in the long-term future of the construction industry, which has been plagued by overcapacity and low demand.

Analysts welcomed the deal but some expressed concern over the large cash demands Wimpey would face running a house-building company with a land-bank of more than 50,000 plots. Mr Dwyer expected to spend in excess of £200m a year simply replacing the land consumed by new houses.

Wimpey estimates that it will control about 10 per cent of the UK's new-build housing market following the merger. Barratt and Beazer, the next largest rivals, have market shares of only about 4 per cent.

KKR sizes up Littlewoods bid

NIGEL COPE

The UK arm of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the American leveraged buy-out specialist, has confirmed an interest in bidding for Littlewoods, the retail and football pools empire. The interest could spark a bit battle for the Liverpool-based group, which is already the subject of a £1.3bn indicative offer from its former chief executive, Barry Dale.

Though no formal representation has been made to the Liverpool-based company, the KKR team is said to be "watching the situation closely". KKR is thought to have management candidates in mind to run Littlewoods if it makes a formal offer. However it has de-

nied it is backing Tony Fitzsimons, the former chief executive of the Bristol & West Building Society.

Littlewoods said last night it had received no contact from KKR though it added that further bid interest would come as no surprise. KKR's UK division, called Glenisla, is led by Ian Martin, the former chief executive of Burger King, who joined as UK chief executive earlier this year.

The group was involved in early discussions with Mr Dale, but decided not to take its involvement further at that time. Mr Dale is now being advised by merchant bank Dawnay Day and has financial backing from blue-chip venture capital groups.

Any KKR offer would pose a serious threat to Mr Dale's consortium. Mr Dale was ousted from the group last year and is unlikely to be popular with some factions of the Moores family, which controls all the Littlewoods shares.

Mr Dale's consortium recognises the risk of its bid being used as a stalking horse for another group that may ultimately be more successful. However it is sceptical KKR is genuinely interested in taking its interest much further.

The Dale consortium is expecting to strengthen its management team with a high-profile chairman who would be widely respected by the Moores family. The group has made approaches to one or

two "captains of industry" who have expressed an interest. If the bid was successful, Mr Dale would be chief executive and John Coleman, the former chief executive of Texas Homecare, would be managing director of the retail division.

So far only Mr Dale's

consortium has made an indicative offer. Littlewoods has called an emergency general meeting next month, when the 32 members of the Moores family who own all the shares in the company will decide whether or not to take the bid further and allow the Dale consortium access to the Littlewoods books.

Littlewoods' retail and pools businesses has been struggling. Last year it reported flat profit of £116m on sales of £2.7bn.

Associated British Foods

The Chairman reports on a year of progress

Sales increased by 9 per cent and profits before tax by 16 per cent.

Expenditure on new assets and subsidiaries amounted to £355 million. A major acquisition at the end of the year was a leading speciality oils and fats based food ingredients group in the United States.

A bonus issue of ordinary shares is proposed. The second interim dividend will be paid on the increased share capital, and is a 9.4 per cent increase on the previous year.

Summary of results	1995 £ million	1994 £ million
Turnover	4,894	4,478
Profit before tax	375	324
Shareholders' funds	2,258	2,090
Dividends per share (on the increased number of shares)	8.75p	8.00p

The above are extracts from the Annual Report and Accounts 1995 sent to shareholders on 15th November 1995.

Associated British Foods plc,
Weston Centre, 68 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7LQ, England.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

British Gas looks past its woes

So many things have gone wrong for British Gas this year that it is beginning to look like an orchestrated campaign. But it has been at some cost to British Gas shares, which have slumped from a January high of 316.5p to yesterday's 243p, up 2.5p on the day.

The company has suffered a haemorrhage in market share in its industrial and commercial markets. From close to 60 per cent last year, it now commands less than 35 per cent of the market. Prices have tumbled on the back of the current UK gas surplus. The problem has been exacerbated for British Gas by its long-term "take-or-pay" contracts. These could result in paying £520m this year for gas it has not used but is still forced to pay for.

To add to this litany of woes, the company has now warned that this year's spell of fine weather will push full-year earnings below last year's level. The cost to operating profits so far in 1995 has already been £120m and with a further £83m provision for take-or-pay pre-payments, the company did well to hold the fall in nine-month profits to £103m, leaving the pre-tax total at £721m.

Despite all this blood and gore, British Gas remains confident enough of its future to confirm its intention to hold this year's dividend at last year's level of 14.5p. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that some of the problems are being overplayed by the company as a negotiating stance ahead of the review by its regulator, Ofgas, of the price formula for TransCo, the newly-segregated gas pipeline and storage business. What Ofgas decides could have a dramatic impact on the value of the company, with one analyst estimating that a negative outcome would be equivalent to slicing £1bn off revenues over the three years to 1997.

Meanwhile, cost savings from the 1993 restructuring plan – now expected to be £200m this year – are merely offsetting the erosion of the company's business and commercial market share. To keep moving ahead, British Gas will need to find further savings when the domestic market is opened to competition later in the decade.

The political game could have further to go. One possibility is that the company could raise the stakes further with the regulator and the politicians by threatening to walk away from its onerous gas contracts. But while those contracts remain, they are a big obstacle to demerger plans, which management are now thought to see as a

way of unlocking shareholder value. Meanwhile, investors can expect underlying profits of close to £970m this year, putting the shares on a prospective multiple of 11. With a yield of 7.5 per cent, they are worth holding.

Unigate sale opens new doors

For a company that has shed more than its fair share of tears over the spillages of the new Milk Marque regime, Unigate was remarkably quiet on the issue yesterday. This was in spite of a fall in the company's dairy profits from £18.5m to £16.5m and an acceleration in the decline of doorstep milk deliveries, which still account for 40 per cent of Unigate's milk business. Management did not even beat too loudly about supermarket pressure on margins, or the weather.

In a year that has seen a summer heatwave turn into a winter of discontent for many food companies, this was an impressively upbeat performance. The 12.5 per cent hike in half-year profits to £60m will have

helped management's mood. But the other key reason for the company's spirited stance is that a diversification away from the troubled milk sector is looking ever more achievable.

Over the past five years Unigate has been divesting core businesses, such as car dealerships and animal feed, to concentrate solely on its food and distribution businesses. Giltspur, the American exhibitions business was sold for £40m last month. And the poorly-performing US restaurants business, which includes the Black-Eye Pea and Taco Bueno chains, is also up for sale, even if its recent performance, which saw profits halve from £6m to £3m in the half-year, hardly makes it an attractive prospect.

But the big step forward was yesterday's decision to sell its 29 per cent stake in Nutricia. Having watched its value double to an estimated £329m, Unigate has decided that now is the time to realise the value and put the cash to better use. The proceeds will wipe out Unigate's debts and give it the funds to buy more businesses in its two main sectors.

Hazelwood Foods has long been mentioned as a target when the Nutricia stake was sold. Tibbet & Britten,

the distribution group is another possibility. After plunging to 210p three years ago, Unigate shares have enjoyed a good run since and closed 7p higher yesterday at 432p. On a forward rating of 12 they still look undervalued.

Euro Disney riding for a fall

Euro Disney's shares lost a tenth of their value yesterday, falling 21p to 194p, but it is not clear how the market arrives at even that lowly valuation. Despite the turnaround from losses of Ffr1.8bn (£245m) to a Ffr2m profit in the year to September, the company still has a financial mountain to climb.

Euro Disney's accounts are an accounting mirage. It would be swallowing knee-deep in red ink without goodwill from banks, which granted a holiday on annual interest payments totalling Ffr600m, and Disney's waiver on management fees and royalties.

From next year, the financial pros will start to be removed, and it would take a brave investor to bet Euro Disney will be capable of standing on its own feet. Just to cover the increase in interest costs of Ffr470m by 1998, and the start of royalty and management payments to Disney in 1999, the theme park, tour operations and hotels will have to raise revenues by at least 5 per cent each year.

Boosting footfall through the gate might be achievable, but raising spending on food, drinks and merchandise will prove a bigger challenge. Gate receipts only account for 25 per cent of total revenues. The currency markets aren't helping much, either. A devaluation of the French franc would make a world of difference, in particular for the British, who have easy access to France but can't afford to go.

The rollercoaster ride of Euro Disney's shares over the years makes the white-knuckle experience of the park's Space Mountain pale. It is showing no sign of slowing, with the venture's finances looking as vulnerable as ever.

The banks have already lumbered themselves with 15 per cent of the shares by swapping debt for equity, and would almost certainly strongly resist accumulating more paper given that Euro Disney still plans to build a second part and will knock on their doors for development funds. Other investors should tread as warily.

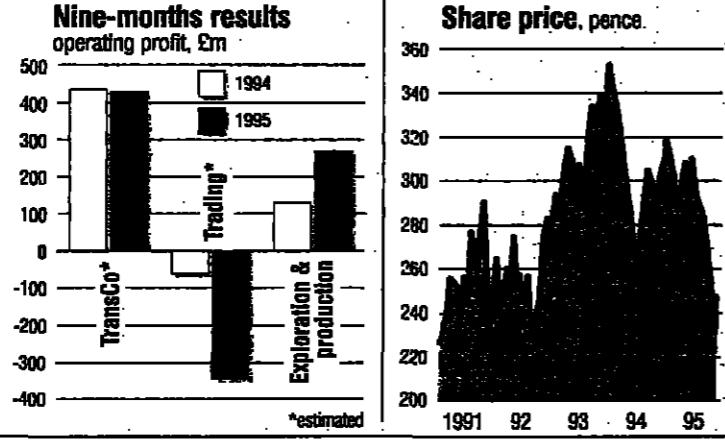
*estimated

British Gas: at a glance

Market value: £10.6bn, share price 241.5p

Trading record	1992	1993	1994	1994 nine months
Turnover (£bn)	5.35	6.45	7.04	7.05
Pre-tax profits (£bn)	1.05	-0.21	1.24	0.82
Earnings per share (pence)	14.2	4.2	17.6	11.9

Dividends per share (pence)	1992	1993	1994	n/a
	14.2	14.5	14.5	n/a

**Fake blood and spending cuts**

Blood has been spilt, the axe-man has run amok. Yes, it's that time of year, when – if leaks of brutal cuts are to be believed – the perennial struggle between the Treasury and spending departments might as well be The Whitehall Chainsaw Massacre, with William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, cast as Butcher Bill.

This year, of course, there is an overriding need to emphasise the sheer scale of the gore and carnage. The audience the Government cares about in the run-up to the Budget is not voters but the financial markets. The imperative for the spin-doctors is to soften up the City for a giveaway budget. The way to do that is to stress the ferocious nature of the spending reductions in order to justify the tax cuts that have become the Tory party's version of manifest destiny. Cuts are now said to be £6bn rather than £3bn off the "control total", the Treasury's key measure of public spending.

Presentation is all in this most political of budgets. Eddie George, Kenneth Clarke's former buddy (until the Chancellor roughed him up over the summer), warned after last year's Budget that tax cuts could only be justified if there was an underlying improvement in the trend rate of economic growth.

There has been scant evidence of that in the past year. Instead, what the Bank along with everyone else, has witnessed is an unexpected worsening in the state of the public finances. So far this year, the PSBR has actually deteriorated in comparison with last.

The underlying PSBR, which excludes privatisation proceeds, has fallen by £2bn, but this is less auspicious than it might seem for two reasons. The first is that privatisation revenues are forecast by the Treasury to be £3.5bn less this year than they were last year. The second concerns the treatment of the pri-

vatised rolling-stock companies. Remarkably, the sale of the Roscos, which raised a cool £1.8bn, is not treated by the Treasury as privatisation proceeds. Instead, it counts both this year and next towards the Department of Transport's budget, with the cycling baron, Sir George Young, the unlikely beneficiary.

The received wisdom about the deteriorating prospects in the PSBR is that the problem has risen essentially on the revenue side. Income tax has been running 1.6 per cent less than the June forecast of 9.4 per cent and VAT revenues have been running 1.5 per cent less than the June forecast of 9.4 per cent.

The reason why the control total is likely to overshoot in real terms is that spending departments are benefiting again from unex-

pectedly low inflation. While retail price inflation has risen this year to almost 4 per cent, the GDP deflator, which measures "home-grown" costs, principally earnings, has risen by only 1 per cent – considerably less than the 3.25 per cent projected by the Treasury last year.

Lower economic growth than expected has contributed, but it cannot be the sole explanation. Consumer spending has been less than forecast, and this has meant that the Treasury has failed to gather the usual harvest in VAT revenues. The new flexible labour market, so lauded by the Treasury, has turned into a tax boomerang. The shift towards more part-time work and the low rate of earnings increase have depressed income tax revenues.

With net departmental outlays only rising in the first six months by 3 per cent – below

Diversification strategy pays off for CU

NIC CICUTTI

Commercial Union, one of the UK's top composite insurers, yesterday claimed its strategy of world-wide diversification in life and general insurance business was vindicated by a 16 per cent profit rise to £381m.

The company's profits rose for the first nine months of 1995 came despite poor performance in the regular premium business in the UK life market. Outside the UK, life operations ac-

counted for 44 per cent of world-wide premiums, leading to a £64m profit rise to £164m.

John Carter, chief executive, said yesterday: "Our operations outside the UK increased their contribution to 56 per cent of territorial operating profits, underlining the importance of our international spread of life and general insurance products in the wake of the pensions mis-selling scandal."

He discounted the possibility of a massive rise in subsidence claims, following the warm sun-

Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY**Mind over matter at Orange County jail**

Robert Citron, the man who presided over the worst municipal financial collapse in US history, presents his country with another first. The 70-year-old treasurer – now awaiting sentencing on six charges relating to the bankruptcy of Orange County – has instructed his lawyers to go for what the Americans call the "Saunders defence".

In fact Ernest Saunders' Alzheimer's condition had no effect on his sentencing in the Guinness trial. It merely speeded his parole. Still, Mr Citron's lawyers are now claiming that their client is also suffering from dementia.

The notion that the former county treasurer was not feeling himself when he lost \$1.6bn on complex derivatives positions will be put forcefully.

The defence submission speaks of "cognitive defects and symptoms of dementia" that afflicted and still afflict Mr Citron.

Which is probably just as well. California takes a dim view of municipal collapse.

Mr Citron is looking at 14 years if the judge gets out on the wrong side of bed.

While publicly condemning the impasse between Democrat President and Republican Congress, corporate America is privately whooping for joy. The shutdown of the government may help much, either. Goodwill from banks, which granted a holiday on annual interest payments totalling Ffr600m, and Disney's waiver on management fees and royalties.

From next year, the financial pros



Our photograph today shows Matthew Bourne's current production of *Swan Lake* at Sadler's Wells. Equally it could be a management training session at Lloyds Bank. Lloyds is keen to exploit the hitherto undiscovered synergies between banking and ballet dancing and has sent 16 bank managers to the Chichester Festival Theatre – for some management tuition from the London City Ballet dancers.

"A successful ballet production is all about teamwork, talent, creativity, strategic planning, attention to detail and a focus on the target audience," says Lloyds' director Tony Bird. "Skills that are equally applicable in banking." Jo Carter, London City Ballet's stage manager was equally enthusiastic, claiming that Lloyds will "learn the magic of a final performance combines vision, stamina and teamwork."

Sell the shares.

for price rises. Inflation figures could soon go badly awry, economists warn. Make the most of yesterday's.

The talk in the watering holes that serve the financial services community is that BAT, owner of Eagle Star and Allocated Dunbar, is poised to buy a building society. No idle gossip this, according to drinkers. They claim the plan is fully primed.

Amid the continuing merger rumours that so far have linked everyone with everyone – the firm favourite to emerge is Bradford & Bingley. This would come as a rude shock to John Wrigglesworth, the well known

and oft-quoted building society pundit who left the City to join the Yorkshire society. Mr Wrigglesworth never ceases to trumpet the merits of mutuality and how the B&B must remain independent. We shall see. Bristol & West may also be in the frame.

The Automobile Association is contemplating a temporary halt to the aggressive promotion of its car security devices. Both its shops that specialise in the alarms, locks and immobilisers – in Sheffield and Ashton-under-Lyne – have been burgled.

If you are offered a stolen burglar alarm, you know where it came from.

IN BRIEF**Dawson issues new profits warning**

Yarns and garment manufacturer Dawson International issued a fresh profits warning yesterday. The newly-installed chairman, Derek Finlay, said second-half results would not match those in the first half as he announced a 47 per cent fall in underlying profits to £3.4m in the six months to September. Mr Finlay blamed the problems on the warm weather and a lack of consumer confidence, as well as uncertainty over cashmere prices, which have risen by more than 100 per cent over the past 12 months.

Move to take motor dealer private

The directors of Frank G Gates, the Ford dealer, have unveiled plans to take the company private and forecast a collapse in profits this year. Court approval is to be sought for a new company formed by the Gates family directors and other members of the board to acquire the outstanding shares at a price of 87p. The directors have forecast a 52 per cent cut in profit to £850,000 for the year ending in December. The company is proposing to sell its car dealership business at Woodford, Walthamstow, Letchworth and Hitchin in a deal worth up to £8m. The two Ford main dealer franchises operated from the properties being disposed of will terminate but the "Gates" trading name will be retained.

Flat Land Securities lifts dividend

Land Securities, Britain's biggest property investor, declared a 3.6 per cent increase in its interim dividend to 7.1p, despite flat profits of £18.1m (£11.9m) in the six months to September. Peter Hunt, chairman, said profits were bound to be adversely affected by the big development programme on which the company was engaged. He added that rental growth was evident in certain sectors of the market, but admitted that the improvement was slow.

Melrose offer boosts Pentex shares

Melrose Energy has launched a £31.2m recommended bid for the oil and gas explorer Pentex Oil. The £1-for-20 share offer is being accompanied by a £13.2m rights issue to provide working capital for the enlarged group. Melrose shareholders are being offered one new share at 34p for every five held. The company is forecasting a 50 per cent dividend increase to 0.72p for the year to June next and believes that the takeover should be earnings-enhancing. News of the offer, worth 156p a share, sent Pentex shares up 20p to 140p yesterday. Pentex shareholders holding 61 per cent have given undertakings to accept the offer.

Tom Cobleigh sets float price

The flotation price for 15.37 million shares in Tom Cobleigh, the operator of 46 pubs spread across the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, has been set at 150p each. The price values the company at £6.0m.

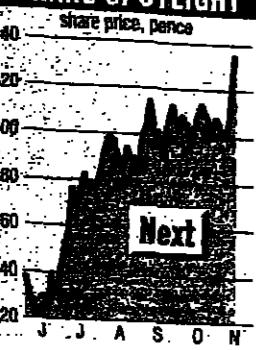
Century to invest in pub estate

Century Inns is to use the proceeds of its stock market placing to invest up to £9m a year in its pub estate. The money will also be used to pay off £11m in debt and its preference and redeemable ordinary shares, according to the pathfinder prospectus issued yesterday. Pre-tax profits at the pubs group in the North were cut from £5.6m to £4.9m in the 12 months to September after being depressed by a £1m exceptional charge for costs relating to the postponement of the original flotation in February when the Office of Fair Trading announced an inquiry into wholesale beer prices.</

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100	3,571.4 + 23.5
3,922.2 + 16.9	
FT-SE 350	1,775.1 + 10.8
SEAQ VOLUME	688m shares, 27,869 bargains
Gilt's Index	94.33 - 0.02

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

Much talk of action, but still no break-up, at Cable

Is the long mooted break-up at Cable and Wireless underway? Speculation mounted yesterday as the stock market closed that today's profits announcement could be accompanied by corporate deals and boardroom changes.

Hidden riches have long lurked at the group. Its 57.5 per cent stake in Hong Kong Telecom accounts for most of its £9.3bn capitalisation. Mobile telephones, cabling, 80 per cent of the Mercury telephone network and a host of joint ventures, help make the sum of the parts worth far more than £9.3bn. The shares are expected to underperform until C&W grasps the break-up nettle.

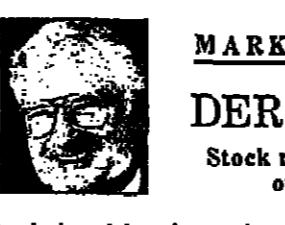
One suggestion is that the company is on the verge of a deal with its mobile phones rival Vodafone, which has been weighed down by stories that it plans a heavy cash call to fund a bid. There is also persistent talk of boardroom unease at

Cable; Lord Young, the chairman, is said to be striving to resist moves to split what is regarded as a telecommunications federation. Today's interim results are expected to be uninspiring with profits emerging at £611m against £567m.

Cable shares slipped 2p to 423p with Vodafone recovering a little with a 4p gain to 255p.

Zeneca, the drugs group, was the outstanding blue chip, surging 46.5p to a 1,290.5p peak as stories continued to circulate of an overseas bid. Turnover was not particularly heavy but with much of the buying seemingly coming from Switzerland, home of Roche and the Ciba-Geigy drug groups, the market was quickly gripped by take over fever.

Rumours linking Zeneca with an overseas strike have often captivated the market. This year the drugs industry has produced a series of spectacular

**MARKET REPORT****DEREK PAIN**

Stock market reporter of the year

ular deals and there is surprise Zeneca has managed to remain aloof from the scramble.

The rest of the stock market enjoyed its best gain for a month with the FT-SE 100 index up 23.5 points at 3,571.4. A fall in retail sales prompted thoughts of an interest rate cut and the Queen's Speech received a favourable reception. And with New York in early trading, stretching to new highs the uncertainty created by the looming Budget was for once pushed aside.

Next, the retailer, had an outstanding day, moving to yet another peak, up 17p at 436p. A NatWest Securities push, following a meeting with the

company, prompted the gain. The summer heatwave has produced doubts about many clothing groups. Most will have to work hard to recover lost sales. But the story from Next, it would appear, is that it has weathered the sunshine in better shape than most and profit estimates stretching to £123m will be hit. Asda, the supermarket chain, added 3.75p to 102.5p on Credif Lyonmais Laing support and Storhouse put on 15p to 311p on a Barclays de Zoete Wedd recommendation.

Hambros, the merchant bank, produced the expected poor figures but the shares gained 9p to 207p following the

declaration by Gruppo Banca San Paolo, the Italian bank, that it intended to lift its shareholding to near 20 per cent.

Abbey National held at 569p as it became apparent it had approached the Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester building societies.

Unigate gained 7p to 432p after it confirmed a long running market rumour—the sale of its 29 per cent interest in the Dutch baby food group, Nutricia. The £330m sale is likely to prompt a flurry of deals by Unigate with Hazzlewood Foods, up 3p at 111p, the favourite target.

The surprise assets swap left Tarmac 9p up at 93.5p and George Wimpey 15p better at 127p. Lloyds Chemists enjoyed a late run, gaining 16p to 248p as bid speculation resurfaced. Cray Electronics also jumped 8p to 54p on vague talk of corporate action.

TAKING STOCK

Applied Holographics continued its firm run, adding 7p to 103p. Talk of a contract with Microsoft, the US computer house, is apparently helping the action.

The group is one of the biggest blue-sky hope shares in the market. The price has touched 359p. But AH has chalked up 12 years of losses and profits are not expected, even by the optimists, for some time. Earlier this year it raised £2.3m through a rights issue at 60p.

Pentex, the oil group, gained 20p to 140p on the agreed swap exchange offer from Melrose, which is raising £13.2m through a rights issue.

Rosspur made the expected dismal return, trading at its 3p rights price against a 6.5p suspension.

Branteflife Aggregates gained 2p to 22p as Albert E Sharp suggested that the shares "look substantially undervalued". The broker said that Branteflife had "no major exposure to risk of further road cutbacks" and enjoyed the prospect of earnings enhancing acquisitions. Profits are forecast at £1.85m for this year and £2.2m next.

SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: * Ex rights x Ex-dividend x Listed Securities Market x Suspended pp Partly Paid x NH Paid Shares

Source: Muster

THE INDEPENDENT INDEX

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Sean. Simply dial 0891 123 333, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 123 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Call cost 39p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include VAT

MARKET LEADERS: TOP 20 VOLUMES

Stock	Vol '95	Stock	Vol '95	Stock	Vol '95
Tarmac	20,000	Onglet	16,000	Hanson	7,400
ASDA Group	20,000	BT	9,400	Mats & Sopwith	7,200
Lectron	17,000	Tomlin	6,500	General Elect	6,700
Brian Gair	11,000	Police Royce	6,500	Bulet	5,700
Vodafone	10,000	British Steel	5,000	Wimpey	5,600
				Parsons	5,500

FT-SE 100 INDEX HOUR BY HOUR

Open 3545.2 down 2.7 11.00 2657.3 up 9.4 14.00 3557.2 up 9.3

Open 3545.2 down 0.7 12.00 3558.1 up 10.2 15.00 3558.2 up 10.3

Open 3545.2 down 1.0 13.00 3557.5 up 0.8 16.00 3571.6 up 23.7

Closes 3571.4 up 23.5

Index 3571.4 up 23.5

Stock

Yield

PE Code

Motorway Services 14.5 2371

Marine Supply 14.7 2644

Financial Times 15.2 4068

Portuguese 15.3 2645

Portuguese 15.4 2646

Portuguese 15.5 2647

Portuguese 15.6 2648

Portuguese 15.7 2649

Portuguese 15.8 2650

Portuguese 15.9 2651

Portuguese 16.0 2652

Portuguese 16.1 2653

Portuguese 16.2 2654

Portuguese 16.3 2655

Portuguese 16.4 2656

Portuguese 16.5 2657

Portuguese 16.6 2658

Portuguese 16.7 2659

Portuguese 16.8 2660

Portuguese 16.9 2661

Portuguese 17.0 2662

Portuguese 17.1 2663

Portuguese 17.2 2664

Portuguese 17.3 2665

Portuguese 17.4 2666

Portuguese 17.5 2667

Portuguese 17.6 2668

Portuguese 17.7 2669

Portuguese 17.8 2670

Portuguese 17.9 2671

Portuguese 18.0 2672

Portuguese 18.1 2673

Portuguese 18.2 2674

Portuguese 18.3 2675

Portuguese 18.4 2676

Portuguese 18.5 2677

Portuguese 18.6 2678

Portuguese 18.7 2679

Portuguese 18.8 2680

Portuguese 18.9 2681

Portuguese 19.0 2682

Portuguese 19.1 2683

Portuguese 19.2 2684

Portuguese 19.3 2685

Portuguese 19.4 2686

Portuguese 19.5 2687

Portuguese 19.6 2688

Portuguese 19.7 2689

Portuguese 19.8 2690

Portuguese 19.9 2691

Portuguese 20.0 2692

Portuguese 20.1 2693

Portuguese 20.2 2694

Portuguese 20.3 2695

Portuguese 20.4 2696

Portuguese 20.5 2697

Portuguese 20.6 2698

Portuguese 20.7 2699

Portuguese 20.8 2700

Portuguese 20.9 2701

Portuguese 21.0 2702

Portuguese 21.1 2703

Portuguese 21.2 2704

Portuguese 21.3 2705

Portuguese 21.4 2706

Portuguese 2

Freshers enrol for the course

Greg Wood on an initiative to enlighten students on the ways of the Turf

Can Can Charlie and Captain Marmalade will never be household names, but racing may owe them a considerable debt one the less. As they fought out a stirring finish to the novice hurdle race at Kempton yesterday, dozens of students, many turf novices themselves, were gripped as the advantage swung one way and then another. Even the replay drew gasps and winces. If just two or three catch the racing habit as a result, Kempton's foresight in offering a special student package yesterday will have been richly rewarded.

Much is said about the need to attract new racegoers if the sport is to flourish. The large number of families attending this year's Sunday meetings has been encouraging, yet many courses fail to see beyond creches and clowns as a way of introducing young people to the racing experience, which should, almost by definition, involve an occasional bet. The average five-year-old may enjoy an afternoon at the track, but then they are also likely to enjoy scribbling with felt-tipped pens or playing hide-and-seek. Neither will necessarily become lifelong passions.

Students, by contrast, "can take part in the sport as a betting event, it's the real thing," as Simon Marcantonio, Kempton's public relations officer, pointed out yesterday. Just as importantly, they are also "the opinion-formers of the future." Almost 100 students were attracted by yesterday's concessions, which included admission for just £5, exclusive use of the Thames Suite with a bar at stu-



Undergraduates work out how to supplement their grant and absorb the racing spirit at Kempton yesterday

dent-union prices and, in many cases, free travel to the course from as far away as Norwich.

Cynics will point out that most students would walk barefoot in the North Pole if there was the promise of cheap beer when they arrived. Others might wonder how the sight of fivers being fed into the Thames Suite Tote can be squared with claims of widespread student poverty. John Holmes, the president of the turf club at the University of East Anglia, which brought a 35-strong party yesterday, sees no contradiction.

"A week tomorrow I'm going on a demonstration about student hardship," Holmes said, "and many students experience serious hardship. But the expansion of higher education has involved people for whom money is not such a problem, and we're not just talking about hoary Henrys."

Holmes, who used to appear in *Grange Hill*, cheerfully admits that the acting fees soon found their way to his local betting shop, and the repeat fees from the current re-runs are going the same way. Many others

in his party, though, are relative newcomers to racing. "Probably about two-thirds of them hadn't been racing before a similar student day at Newmarket a few weeks ago," he said. "But they enjoyed that and they've come along again today."

Yesterday's action was just as infectious. After the battle between Can Can Charlie and Captain Marmalade – in which the former regained the lead in the final stride – one student from Brunel University who had backed the runner-up reported that he had still enjoyed

the run he had had for his money. He had been racing before only once, but had already learned that "races like that really get you going, shouting and screaming".

There was something to cheer in the novice chase, too, in which Jamie Osborne produced one of the best rides even of his distinguished career. Myland, a faller on his only previous start over fences, did his best to unseat Osborne at the ninth, and then blundered so badly at the 13th that his rider was left clinging, slurred, to his neck.

Myland lost at least 25 lengths, and when Miracle Man, the odds-on favourite, approached the penultimate fence well clear, his backers were counting their money. Another miracle man, though, was about to have his say. Osborne brought Myland with an irresistible run to catch the leader at the last and win going away.

If his performance did not convert at least a few of the students to the pleasures of the turf, it might be wise to check their vital signs.

Photograph: Peter Jay

GOING: Good.

Left-hand course. Run-in of 200 yards. Course V of 1000 yards. Admissions: £1.50. Children 50p. Students 50p. Seniors 50p. Under-16s 50p. Extra charge 50p.

WARWICK

HYPERION

12.40 Reverend Brown 1.10 Zephyrus 1.40 Cobb

Gata 2.10 Ardronkey Chief 2.40 Nitro 3.10 ONE-SEVENFOLD (nap) 3.40 Tejano Gold

GOING: Good.

Left-hand course. Run-in of 200 yards. Course V of 1000 yards. Admissions: £1.50. Children 50p. Seniors 50p. Under-16s 50p. Extra charge 50p.

RACING CHANNEL

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None. LONG-DISTANCE WINNERS: Nitro (2.40) & One-Sevenfold (3.10) have been sent 250 miles by G Richardson from Gregson's Cumbria.

12.40 ASHMORE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV 1) £3,000 added 2m

5 ANTHONIES AFFAIR (2.5) D French 4.10 12 ... J Lawrence

12 BEADMAN (2.5) P Sims 5.10 12 ... M Fitzgerald

6 BONNIE BOBBY (2.5) 1.10 12 ... J Lawrence

7 BUNNY HOPPER (2.5) 0.50 12 ... J Lawrence

8 CHARLES K (2.5) 10.12 12 ... J Lawrence

9 D. HANLEY BIRD (2.5) Tues 10.12 ... J Lawrence

10 KARISH MAE (2.5) 5.10 12 ... J Lawrence

11 MR HERMIT (2.5) A Weston 10.12 ... J Lawrence

12 MR HERMIT (2.5) 0.50 12 ... J Lawrence

13 MR LEONARD (2.5) S Shewell 5.10 12 ... W Marton

14 STAR MANAGER (2.5) P Wiggin 10.12 ... S Fenton

15 STRANGEL (2.5) 0.50 12 ... J Lawrence

16 TEENAGER (2.5) Tues 10.12 ... J Lawrence

17 YESTERDAY (2.5) Tues 10.12 ... J Lawrence

BETTING: 5-2 Zephyrus, 2-2 Nitro, 1-1 One-Sevenfold, 6-1 Lady Lucy, 10-1 Scarlet Bambler, 12-1 others

11.10 ASHMORE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV 1) £3,000 added 2m

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12 YESTERDAY (2.5) Tues 10.12 ... J Lawrence

BETTING: 5-2 Zephyrus, 2-2 Nitro, 1-1 One-Sevenfold, 6-1 Lady Lucy, 10-1 Scarlet Bambler, 12-1 others

140 HARBURG SELLS HANDICAP (CLASS F) £2,600 2m 4f 11yds

1 AGED (2.5) R Lee 12.50 12 ... J Lawrence

2 AGED (2.5) R Lee 12.50 12 ... J Lawrence

3 AGED (2.5) R Lee 12.50 12 ... J Lawrence

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65 AGED (2.5) R Lee 12.50 12 ... J Lawrence

sport

Illingworth rains on the parade

Martin Johnson in Pretoria finds England's chairman unmoved by the emotion of a historic Test

The historic aspect of the cricket match about to get under way here today has, to no one's great surprise, made scarcely a dent in the emotional armour of two of English cricket's more stoic souls.

Raymond Illingworth spent most of yesterday engaged in the not unfamiliar pursuit of having a grumble - largely about the groundsman's use of a watering can - while Michael Atherton, invited to wax lyrical about the significance of England's first Test match in South Africa since 1963, could barely suppress a yawn.

Illingworth has rarely been more animated of late than when relaying Mrs Illingworth's messages about the water shortage back home in Yorkshire, and when he saw the Test pitch being liberally sprinkled yesterday, he moved in as though he had just spotted the bloke next door hosing the lawn and was making a public-spirited citizen's arrest.

The fact that he was politely told to mind his own business did not improve his mood, and Illingworth, who regards most things practised outside England - or Yorkshire, come to that - in fact, make that Parsley - as more than a little suspect, made it perfectly clear that, in his considered view, Johnny Foreigner was up to no good.

"What sort of pitch are you expecting?" Illingworth was asked. "I can't tell, can I? Not 'till they give up watering it," he replied. "It was already slightly damp first thing in the morning, and then they started watering it again in the afternoon. Pretty unusual if you ask me."

The underlying suspicion in Illingworth's mind was that the

groundsman had been instructed to make sure the pitch favoured a South African attack top-heavy in pace-bowling, and that England would retaliate by adding Mark Illott to the 12 originally selected.

"When I first saw this pitch I thought it would definitely turn," Illingworth said, "and that it would have been a straightforward bat-first decision. But I don't know now. It could be an interesting first couple of hours."

However, while England were clearly leaving themselves the option of playing four seamers, Atherton not only did not quite share Illingworth's view of what was happening to the pitch, but also intimated that he chairman might have been suffering from a touch of water on the brain.

"Raymond said it was unusual for a pitch to be watered the day before a Test," Atherton was asked. "Do you think so well?" "No I don't," he said. "Have you played in a Test when the pitch was watered the day before?" Atherton replied: "Plenty."

The England captain also ventured the view (not shared by Illingworth) that the groundsman might actually know what he was doing. "He knows better than anyone how to prepare his pitch, and one of the great things about cricket is that you have to play in different conditions wherever you go. We are expecting to win whatever the pitch does, but I very rarely feel comfortable going into a Test match without a specialist spinner."

What Illingworth feels uncomfortable about, thrifty soul that he is, is the prospect of De-



Water sports: Raymond Illingworth (left) and Mike Atherton ponder a heavily watered pitch yesterday

Photograph: Graham Chadwick/Alsport

von Malcolm as one of only three pace bowlers. With England having decided on six batsmen, Richard Illingworth's inclusion would therefore place a serious question mark about Malcolm making the final XI. As far as Raymond is concerned, he is only slightly more concerned about whether the pitch is cov-

ered in puddles, than whether Malcolm will be able to land the ball in one of them.

Atherton also has reservations about Malcolm, having more than once sent him to Coventry (or at least to long leg) after a profligate couple of overs, and neither does it bother him that this historic occasion would be

even more historic were a black cricketer seen on the field for the first time in a South Africa v England Test match.

"What about the occasion, Mike?" came the inevitable question. "I'm not really bothered about that," he said. "It's just another Test match. The real importance of this game is

that we win it." Atherton, in short, is not much bothered that the South Africans are planning to mark the occasion with marching bands, mobile discos, fly-pasts, parachutists and crowd-buster competitions, but if any of his batsmen gets out trying to win the few thousand rand on offer for bouncing a six off a giant can of lager, you get the feeling he may not be best pleased.

As for the South Africans, their reliance on fast bowling is reflected by the fact that David Richardson is within one catch of becoming the first wicket-keeper in Test history to record 100 victims without a stumping.

England are more than happy that Fanie de Villiers is likely to miss the entire series through injury, but they still have Allan Donald, Brett Schultz, Shaun Pollock and Brian McMillan to negotiate, and the whole series may hinge on whether England can avoid their customary habit of springing from the starting stalls like a greyhound with two broken legs.

Pakistan to heal the rift

As England A tomorrow become the first English side since Mike Gatting's embittered team eight years ago to play a Test on Pakistani soil the Pakistan Board has moved to heal the rift that has cast a pall over cricketing relations between the two countries.

Arif Abbasi, the Pakistan Cricket Board's chief executive, revealed that in a new era of "interaction" and reconciliation, England has been targeted to help improve standards of umpiring and coaching.

The official also announced that the umpire Shakoor Rana - whose stand-off with Mike Gatting in 1987 at Faisalabad set the tone for further controversies - "would never stand in another Test".

Significantly, Don Ossler, the English umpire who accused Pakistan of ball-tampering in 1992, has been invited on a lecture tour of the country.

Sampras powers past Becker

Tennis

Pete Sampras humiliated Boris Becker in front of his adoring German public in Frankfurt yesterday while confirming his position as favourite to win the ATP Tour World Championship.

In an arena just a short drive from his home town of Darmstadt, Becker was outmuscled and outplayed in a demolition 6-2, 7-6 defeat which gave Sampras his second victory of the tournament.

The triumph effectively secured the Wimbledon champion a place in the semi-finals after the round-robin stage. More importantly, it gave the American a confidence-boosting victory over the player he regards as his fiercest rival at the year-ending championship.

The capacity 9,000 Festhalle crowd was hoping for a party for Becker a week before his 28th birthday but many of the fans behaved in an ill-mannered way, hardly applauding any of Sampras's superb groundstrokes and serves, shouting during points and roasting Becker's name in football style.

Sampras ignored all the distractions with a superb display from the front and back of the court. He departed after one hour and 21 minutes, leaving marks on the carpet where his 125 mph aces had left Becker swiping at them.

The first 25 minutes were the best anyone has played against me in this hall," Becker said. "He was on fire. I have never seen something like that. It was like a freight train hit me. I just got beaten up and I'm bruised all over."

Sampras added: "It is always difficult playing Boris. It is one thing to try to beat him because he is a great player - another thing dealing with the crowd."

In the red group, Sweden's Thomas Enqvist opened his account with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over former the world No 1, Jim Courier, of the United States.

■ Steffi Graf, the joint world No 1 with Monica Seles, began her challenge in the WTA Tour Championships with a 6-2, 6-2, first-round win over Amanda Coetzer in New York yesterday.

Results, Sporting Digest,

page 28

sexton is
convinced
of Fowler's
maturity

South Africa vs England



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SMITH.

England beat
Pakistan as
Sunderland
rests

Daily confident of
Scotland's chance

Battling display pleases Gould

Albania
Wales

1 absence, allowed the speedy Kushta to nip past him and race into the box, and his only response was a scything foul.

The Israeli referee pointed straight to the penalty spot and Young must have been relieved not to receive a card of any colour, for what appeared a professional foul, Kushta got up to take the kick himself and although his first successful conversion was ruled out for encroachment, he made no mistake second time around, sending Southall the wrong way.

Wales battled back well, though, and equalised in the 41st minute. The goal owed much to the quick thinking of Dean Saunders, who took a throw down the left, but even more to the class of Giggs. The Manchester United man raced into space before picking out Pembridge's perfectly timed run and the midfielder headed home confidently.

Two minutes into the second half Southall was just a spectator as an acrobatic volley from Altin Rraklli thumped against the bar, but after that Wales recovered their poise. They had two goals disallowed, while Giggs missed two good chances. The draw ensured Wales finished above the Albanians in fourth place in Group Seven, thanks to their win in Cardiff last September.

ALBANIA: Strakosha, Zogaj, Shala, Dene, Lekaj, Gashi, Lekaj, Rrustemi, Mala, Kushta, Zafa, 79; Raliti, Pana.

WALES: Southall (Swansea); Jenkins (Huddersfield), Bevan (Norwich), Phillips (Nottingham Forest), Evans (Middlesbrough), McNamee (Sheffield Wednesday), Pembridge (Sheffield Wednesday), Saunders (Gateshead), Hughes (Luton), Giggs (Manchester United), Substitutes: Savage (Cardiff City), Henton, 82; Robins (Charlton) for Taylor, 84.

Referee: D Sulah (Ireland).

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Inside the first minute Neville Southall was beaten by a free-kick from Lefid Pano which crashed against his upright, and four minutes later the Welsh were behind. The Wolves defender Eric Young, back in the Welsh team after a 20-month

cap, held on to earn a draw.

Inside the first minute Neville

Southall was beaten by a free-

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